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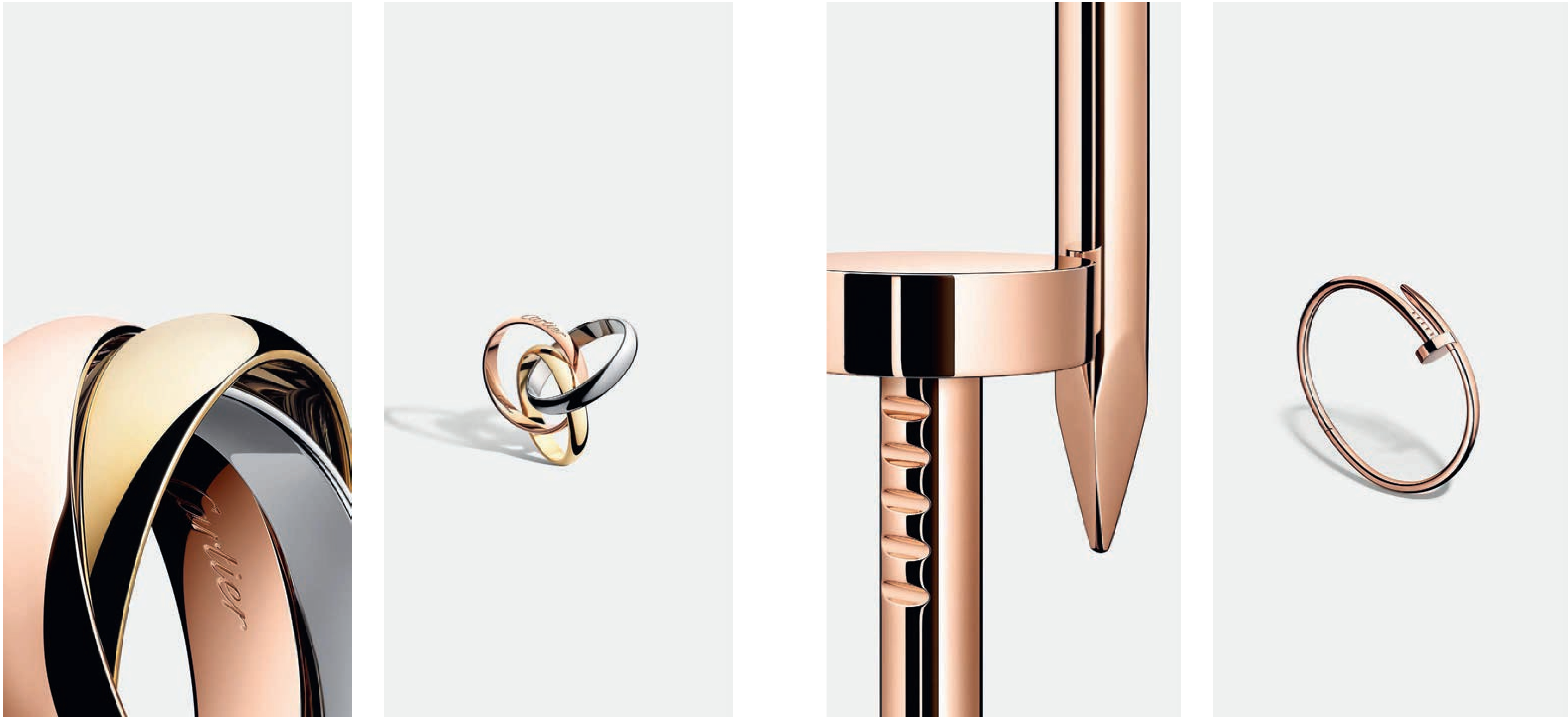
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WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS
With their fierce, competitive spirit, Olympic winners PV Sindhu, Saikhom Mirabai Chanu and Lovlina Borgohain are bringing forth athletic equality by fostering an arena for change.
Photographed by R Burman
Styled by Priyanka Kapadia

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Embrace the new season's softer side in some of its most romantic pastoral looks.
Photographed by Dana Marlensen
Styled by Clare Richardson

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By Shahnaz Siganporia

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CRAFTING MAGIC
The latest craftcore trend is a mix of sensorial pairings. Shot in the hills of Dharamsala, knit meets patchwork, weaves combine with prints, and layers unwind to reveal a tapestry of nostalgic memories.
Photographed by Tenzin Lhagyal
Styled by Priyanka Kapadia

TENZIN LHAGAL. EMBELLISHED DRESS,DECASTRO. PATCHWORK JACKET, PERO. LONG BEADED NECKLACE, SAVIO JON. 'MOLII' NECKLACE, STUDIO LOVE LETTER. 'SHERE KHAN' NECKLACE, DOROTHÉE SAUSSET. BEADED NECKLACE, LABEL GRAPH. BEADED FLORAL NECKLACE, INEZE

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KAROLINA SKOREK

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August saw *Vogue* India's first-ever two-day online Diamond Festival in association with The Natural Diamond Council. Priyanka Parkash recounts the conversations on carats, contemporary design and couture

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Perizaad Zorabian's personal brand of eternal happiness is

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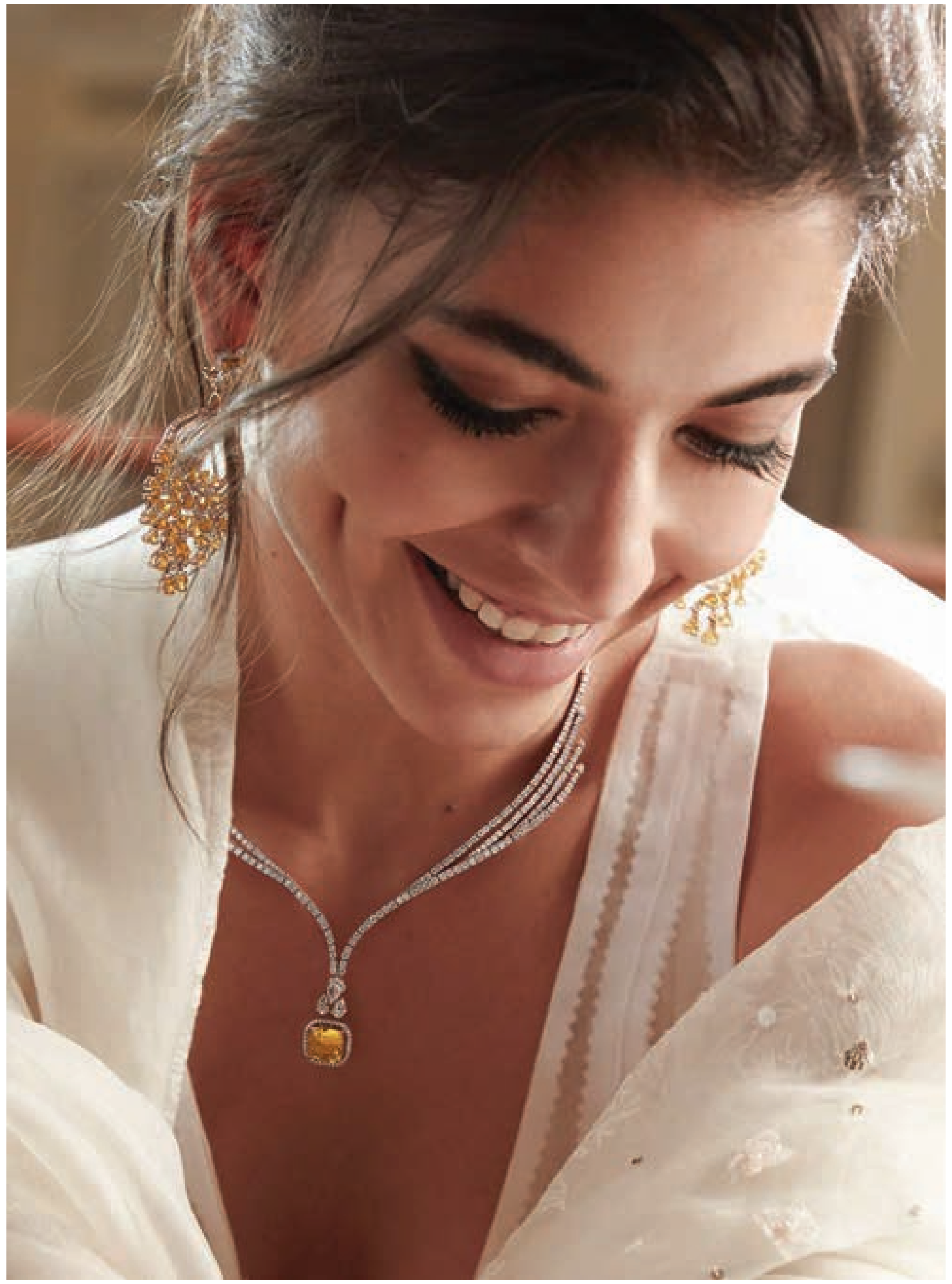

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COVER LOOK

PV Sindhu: Dress, **Dhruv Kapoor**. Ring, **Misho**. Sneakers, **Christian Louboutin**. *Saikhom Mirabai Chanu:* Top, **Dhruv Kapoor**. *Lovlina Borgohain:* Jumpsuit, **Ralph Lauren** from **The Collective**. Earrings, **The Line**. Hair and makeup: Ashima Kapoor (Lovlina, Mirabai); Mitesh Rajani (PV). Photographed by **R Burman**. Styled by **Priyanka Kapadia**

nearly envious. It's a state of mind, but it is also a genuine work in progress, something she toils at every day by focusing on the good. By Aditi Bhimjyani

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Antioxidant-rich cannabidiol (CBD), known for its anti-inflammatory, acne-fighting and nourishing properties, is rising the beauty ranks

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From the strains of a tanpura to the view of heritage buildings in a metropolis, there's no one magic formula to finding your bliss. But somewhere between nostalgia and hope, these eight creatives seem to have secured the key to spaces that bring them joy

186 Small wonders
If the past year and a half has taught us anything, it's that joy is fleeting and any source of good cheer needs to be preserved at all costs. Priya Ramani chases the new meaning of happiness to discover that the answer lies far from a new convertible or a hefty paycheque

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Her seductive depiction of how 20-somethings live, catapulted Sally Rooney to literary fame. Her latest book reckons with the thornier aspects of fame, finds Olivia Marks

192 Loud and clear
The first Indian-origin face on the global burlesque stage, Sukki Menon is using her art form to foster a safe and empowering space for South Asian women. By Sheree Gomes Gupta

194 Creature comforts
For many, the one emotional support in this past year of isolation came from staying home with their four-legged friends. Fostering one of the highest rates in canine and feline adoptions, the lockdown also pushed forth a new set of entrepreneurs who are revolutionising India's pet industry. Purva Mehra reports on how our pets saved us during the pandemic

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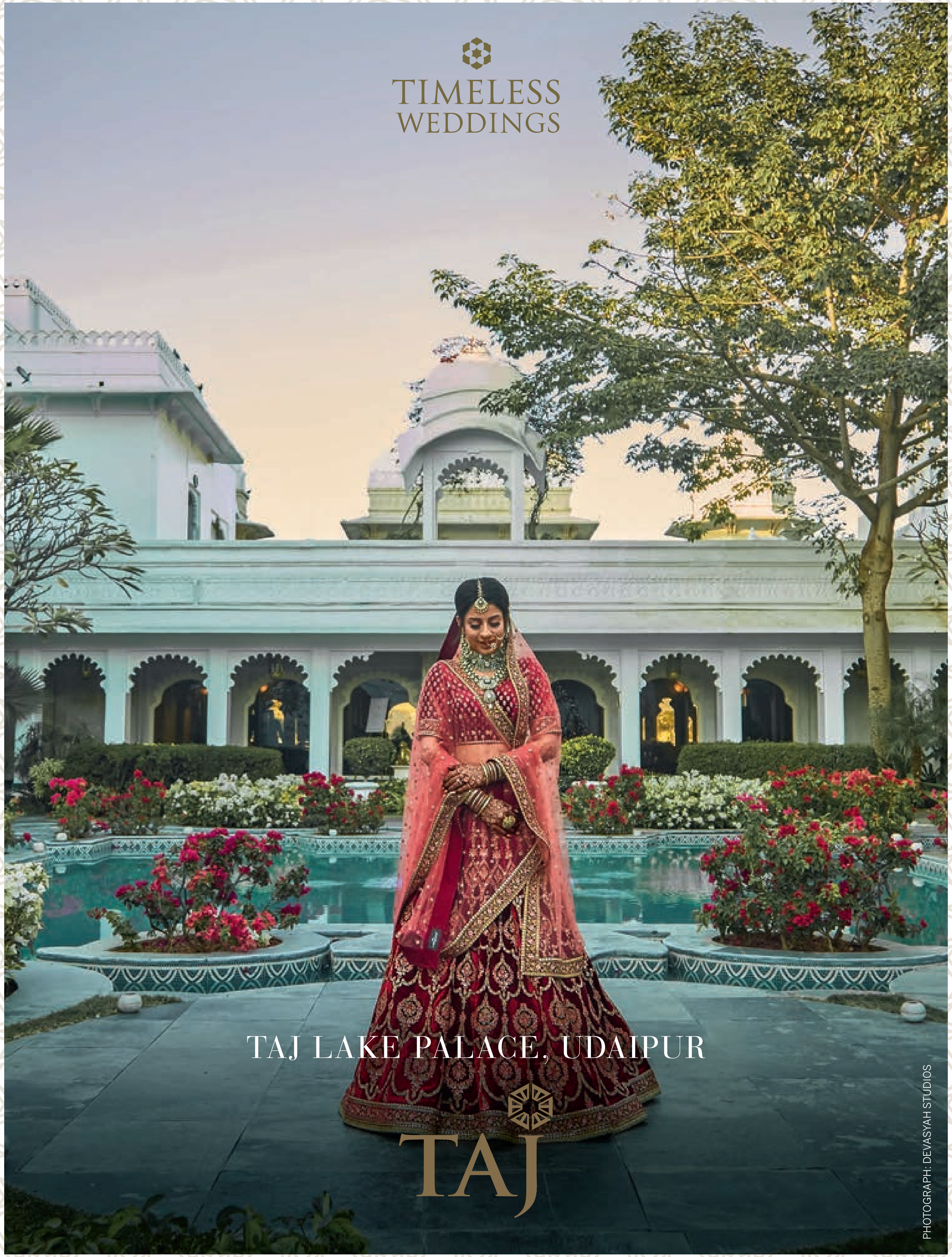
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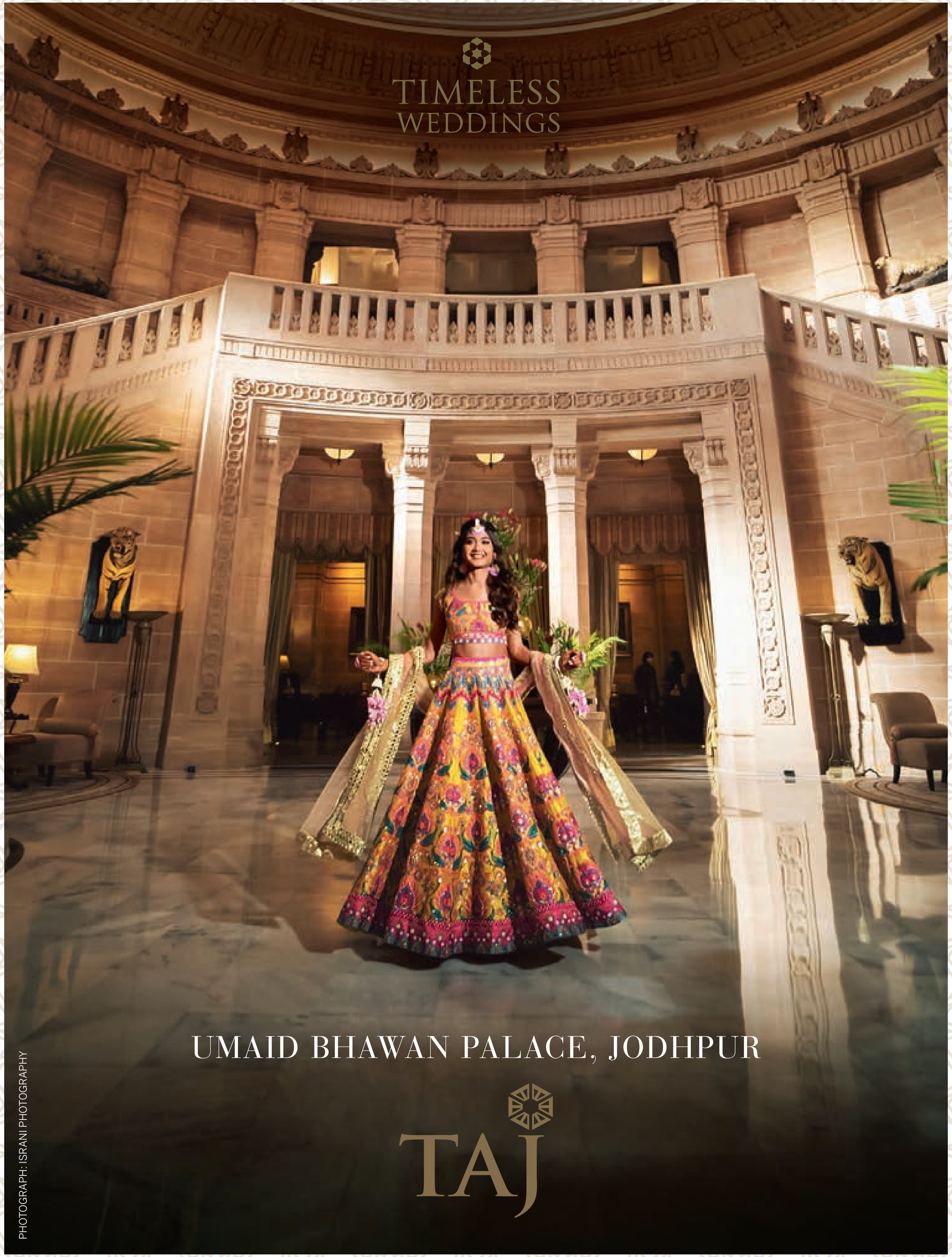
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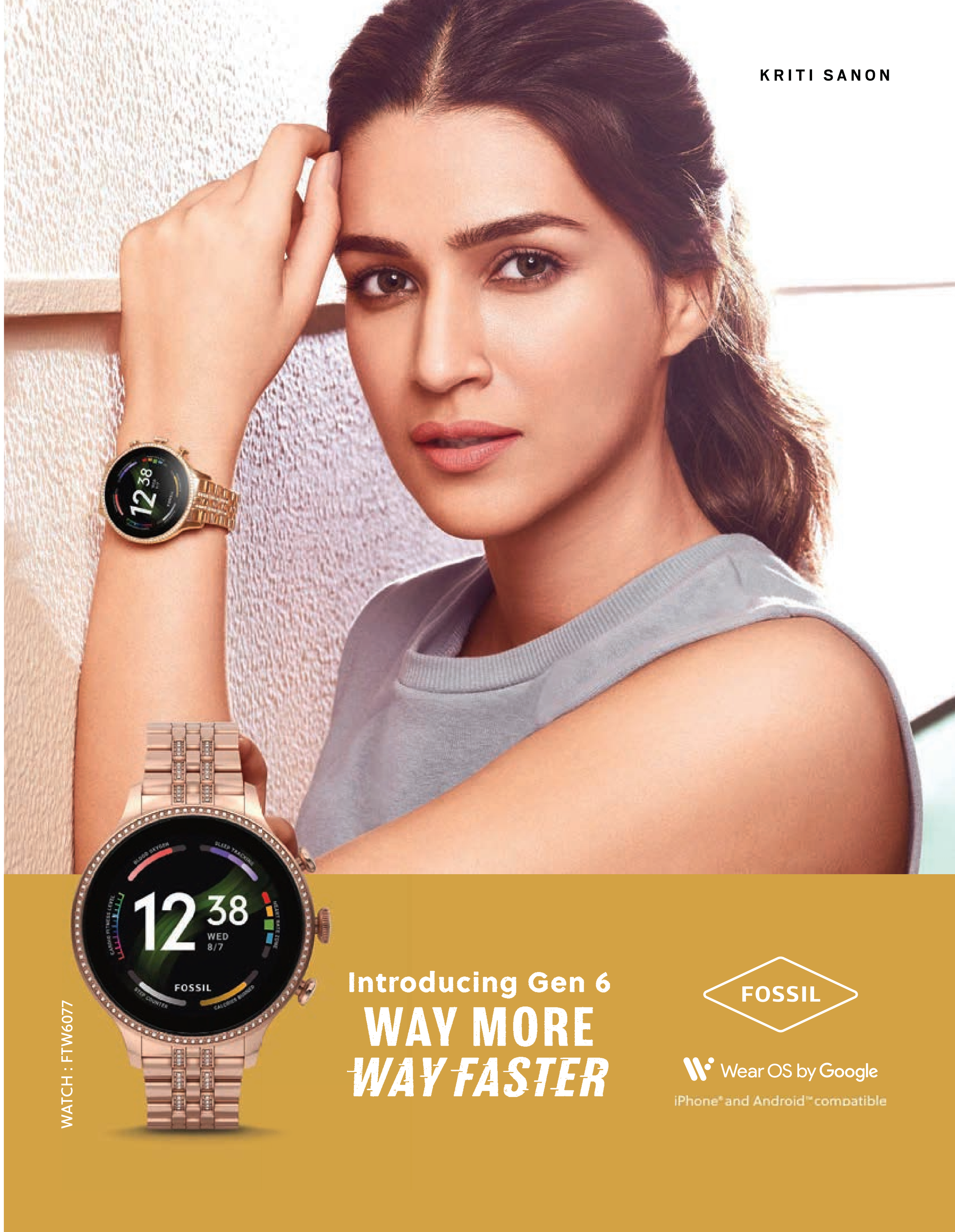

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Get to know...

Our contributors from the October issue

RID BURMAN
A well-known fashion photographer who shuttles between Paris and India, Burman shot 'We are the champions', featuring 2021 Olympic winners PV Sindhu, Mirabai Chanu and Lovlina Borgohain. He is currently wrapping up a book he has been working on with his wife for the last couple of years. *Page 142*

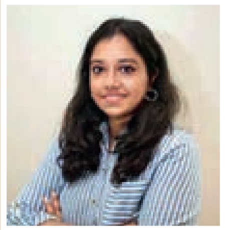
TENZIN LHAGYAL
Born in Tibet and raised in Dharamsala, Lhagyal is currently working on a personal project that explores his feelings of longing and displacement. The Delhi-based photographer returned to his hometown to shoot 'Crafting magic', which explores the nostalgia-steeped trend of craftcore fashion. *Page 166*

AKSHARA SUBRAMANIAN
Fashion-tech marketing head at Vue.ai, Subramanian also co-founded The Work Wife, a community which teaches working Indian women to navigate their careers and lives outside of it. In 'My happy place', she profiles women founders who marry friendship and business. *Page 112*

WHOSE
SAMOSA
IS IT ANYWAY?
SONAL VED

SONAL VED
The author of *Tiffin* (Roli Books), Ved is also *Vogue* India's contributing food editor. Her third book, *Whose Samosa Is It Anyway?*, is out on Penguin India this month. In this issue, her piece 'Walk on the wild side' spotlights the rising trend of urban foraging in India. *Page 200*

ANUPAMA BAGRI
A founding member at *Firstpost* and a sports journalist with *The Times Of India* and *The Indian Express*, Bagri, who interviewed Lovlina Borgohain, currently teaches in Hong Kong. *Page 142*



SUPRITA DAS
Currently heading communications at the Delhi Capitals IPL franchise, Das, who interviewed Saikhom Mirabai Chanu for this issue, has previously worked at NDTV and is the author of *Shadow Fighter* and *Free Hit*. *Page 142*

ARUN JANARDHAN
Janardhan, who spoke to PV Sindhu for this issue, splits his time between Goa and Mumbai while contributing to *Mint*, *GQ* India and *Moneycontrol.com*. *Page 142*

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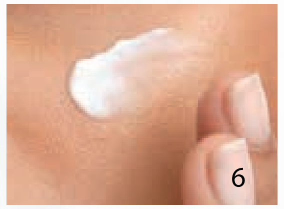
REJUVENATES CELLS 4	COMBATS OXIDATIVE STRESS ⑤	 6
HYDRATES SKIN ⑦	BOOSTS SKIN IMMUNITY 8	ENHANCES ELASTICITY ⑨
10	LESSENS WRINKLES ⑪	LIGHTENS DARK SPOTS 12
CONTROLS MELANIN PRODUCTION ⑬	MINIMIZES PORES 14	⑮
OPTIMIZES SKIN CLARITY 16	RECOVERS ⑰	REPAIRS 18
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After nine months of intense labour, on September 22, 2007 we launched *Vogue* India. Now 14 years later, my vivacious first-born continues to raise a toast to style and the stylish, to women and all that matters to them, and above all, to India and all things Indian. Filled with objects of joy, stories of eternal optimism and ambassadors of hope (a hat tip to our Olympian cover girls), I hope *Vogue* India's 14th anniversary issue (and my last) will leave you reignited, refreshed, rewired and excited for what's next.

As I write this, my last note to you as the magazine's editor-in-chief, I do it with pride, joy and immense gratitude. To everyone who made this fairy tale come true and made this journey rich and meaningful—a big thank you. And the biggest gratitude I reserve for you, my readers—our biggest cheerleaders and critics, you will always be *Vogue* India's eternal muses.

I leave you with my 14 Vogueisms—call them tips, learnings or epiphanies, these have been my biggest takeaways.

Invest in timeless bags, beautifully tailored jackets, good skincare and perfectly fitted lingerie. Invest in a great bed, sexy kitchen gadgets and art that makes you happy. Invest in friends and holidays; both are life's oxygen.
Break away from wearing black dresses and red lipstick, from routine, from toxic people and above all, from ill-fitting clothes.
Don't mind your own business, as staying interested will make you more interesting.
Say no to fishnets, perms, low-rise anything, fake logos and real fur. Forever.
It's never about thin or fat, plus-sized or petite. Fit is beautiful.
Honest truth is clothes make a very strong first impression (find a style that celebrates you). But you are on your own after that.
Starve yourself of excessive screen time and social media.
Take charge of your finances, because smart will always be the new sexy.
Accept that you will always own more books than you can read, and that's okay.
Surround yourself with SPF, water, meditation, grandparents, greens, the environment—all treasures of the earth.
Have pets, or children—or both. They make you a better person.
Don't ignore your elbows, neck or hands. Show them some TLC. And don't ignore a lump, your fatigue or being stuck in a rut.
Understand balance and judge less, hoard less, compare less. Sleep more, communicate more and laugh more.
***Vogue* is not** a destination. It's a journey to staying smart, stylish, and above all, you. Enjoy the ride!

Till we meet again.

Priya Tanna

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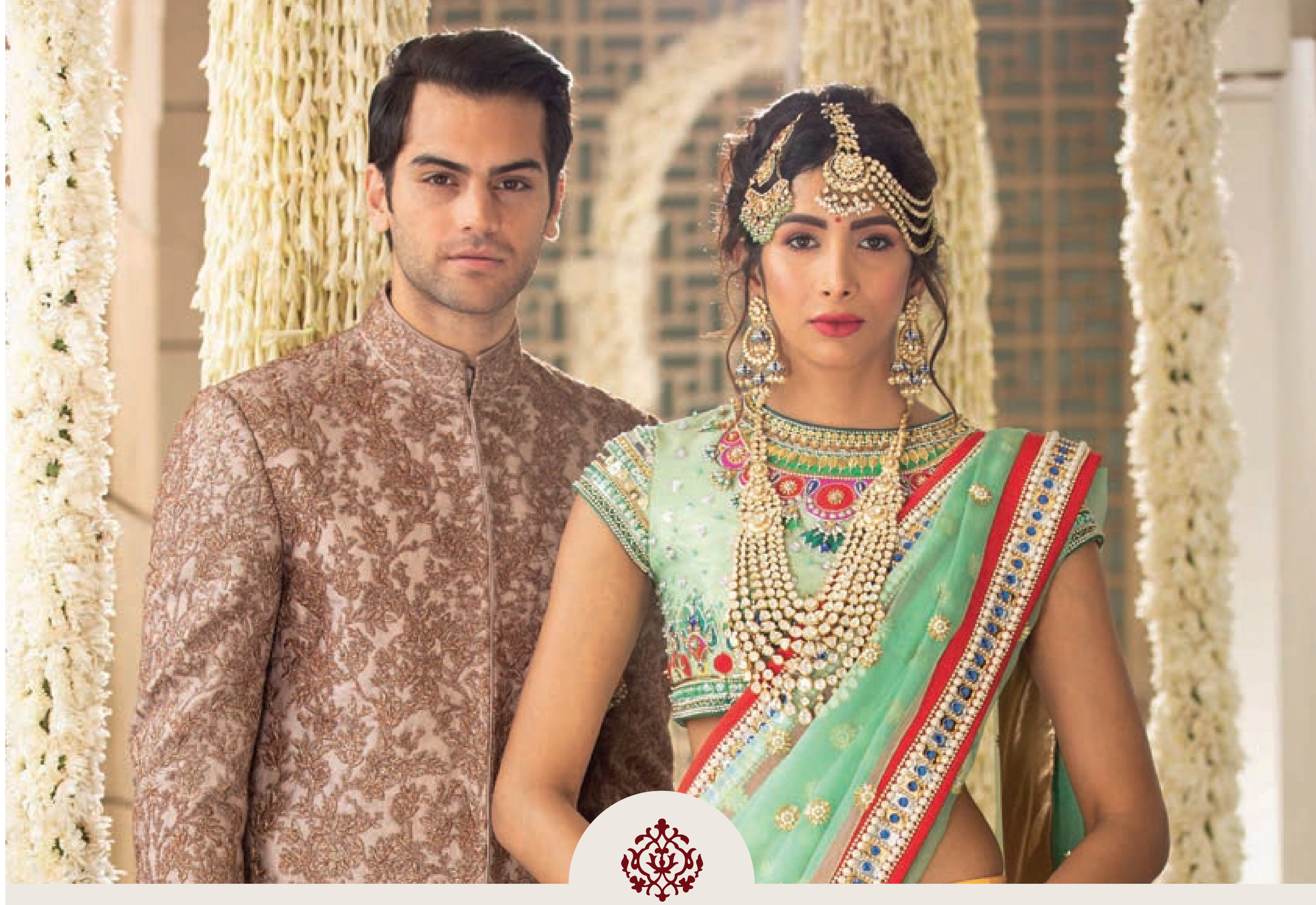
R BURMAN. ON LOVLINA: JUMPSUIT, RALPH LAUREN FROM THE COLLECTIVE. EARRINGS, RING; BOTH THE LINE. SNEAKERS, HERMÈS. ON MIRA: TOP, DHRUV KAPOOR. SHORTS, SHIVAN AND NARRESH. ON PV: DRESS, SRUTI DALMIA. EARCUFF, MISHO



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The Sparkling Heirloom

Vogue and Natural Diamond Council talk to mother-daughter duo Kalyani Saha Chawla and Tahira Tara Chawla about natural diamonds, their endless sparkle, and the sentiments that make them the perfect heirlooms to pass down to the next generation

Honey bee earrings, handcrafted in round and radiant cut diamonds, emeralds and black enamel by Mirari

18 Kt white gold earrings with diamonds and rubies by Thakorlal Hiralal jewellers

Buying a piece of fine jewellery is undeniably a sound investment—one that continues to spark joy while sparkling for years to come. Equal parts mesmerising and enduring, owing to which you'd find one tucked away in jewellery boxes that are passed down through generations, natural diamond jewellery is often used to mark endearing milestones, making it a perfect heirloom piece. In conversation with influencers Kalyani Saha Chawla and Tahira Tara Chawla, *Vogue* and NDC explore the relationship between the mother-daughter duo and the true value of heirloom jewellery. "I got very lucky with a mother with impeccably good style and taste, and have definitely inherited that from her," says Tahira. "In terms of styling jewellery, we are very similar—I just let her take the lead and she always helps me style them."

SENTIMENTAL VALUE

For entrepreneur Kalyani Saha Chawla, who founded Rezon Luxury Silverware and is the former Vice President of marketing and communications at Dior India, diamonds hold an unmatched sentimental value. "Natural diamonds are incredibly precious, that itself makes them special. As a gift, it signifies importance and respect—making it a piece you will cherish forever," she says. When an heirloom piece is passed on, the permanence and limitless lustre of a diamond ensures that its story is passed on, too. Kalyani finds that heirloom jewellery is perhaps the most remarkable and special in any jewellery collection. "It holds years of tradition and history, giving it an emotional value with the beauty of memories of your mother, grandmother or even a great grandmother. Nothing quite beats that. Trends come and go, but sentiments are forever."

For daughter Tahira, who's pursuing a career in the world of art in London and is a recent graduate from the Courtauld Institute of Art, jewellery serves as a reminder of a particular time in her life—as every piece comes with its own story from the people she loves. "I think because natural diamonds are so precious and timeless, whenever I have been gifted them, it always comes with a feeling of sentiment. I get passed down jewellery for my birthday, which is a reminder of a milestone in my life and the person that gifted them," says Tahira. "I inherited a pair of diamond and ruby earrings from my grandmother, who was my best friend. I was too young to be wearing them at the time, but now it is even more special to me as it acts as a reminder of my grandmother and our everlasting love for one another."

BUILDING AN HEIRLOOM COLLECTION

For Kalyani, quality, of course, comes first. "I look for value, I would never compromise on quality. When I know Tahira will inherit whatever I have, it must multiply in value years later," says Kalyani, who started building an heirloom collection over a happenstance. "I was in Bombay and went to a jewellers workshop one evening and bought these diamond and sapphire butterflies which I made an excuse to buy for Tahira's first birthday, a week later. I realised soon enough, that buying jewellery was always justified with the fact that my daughter would inherit it!"

THE SUSTAINABLE DIAMOND

In this day and age when sustainability is a way of life, jewellery collections are getting eco-conscious, too—and the natural diamond plays the protagonist when it comes to sparkling through time sustainably. Championing the cause of conscious luxury, Tahira alludes to the fact that natural diamonds are, in fact, the flag bearers of slow-fashion. "As the saying goes, 'diamonds are forever', which has been proven by time," says Tahira, as she remarks that diamonds are forever-pieces to own and adorn. "Diamonds have been passed down for generations, their rarity and timelessness is what makes them sustainable. When I do start to build my own jewellery collection, I will also look into buying repurposed jewellery because this is not only more affordable but also sustainable. And in my opinion, it is always important to remember that it is always quality over quantity!"

For more such stories on relationships, love and priceless heirlooms visit OnlyNaturalDiamonds.in

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Coat, **MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION**. Shearling coat, **Dior**. Pants, **Maite by Lola Casademunt**

SILVIA TORTAJADA. STYLIST: LORETO QUINTANILLA. HAIR & MAKEUP: YUREMA VILLA. MODEL: MARÍA K/LINEUP MODELS ; AURY/TREND MODELS. ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHER: RAFAEL BENITO. ASSISTANT STYLIST: ESTELA LOMBAO; SHAFIKA FLORES

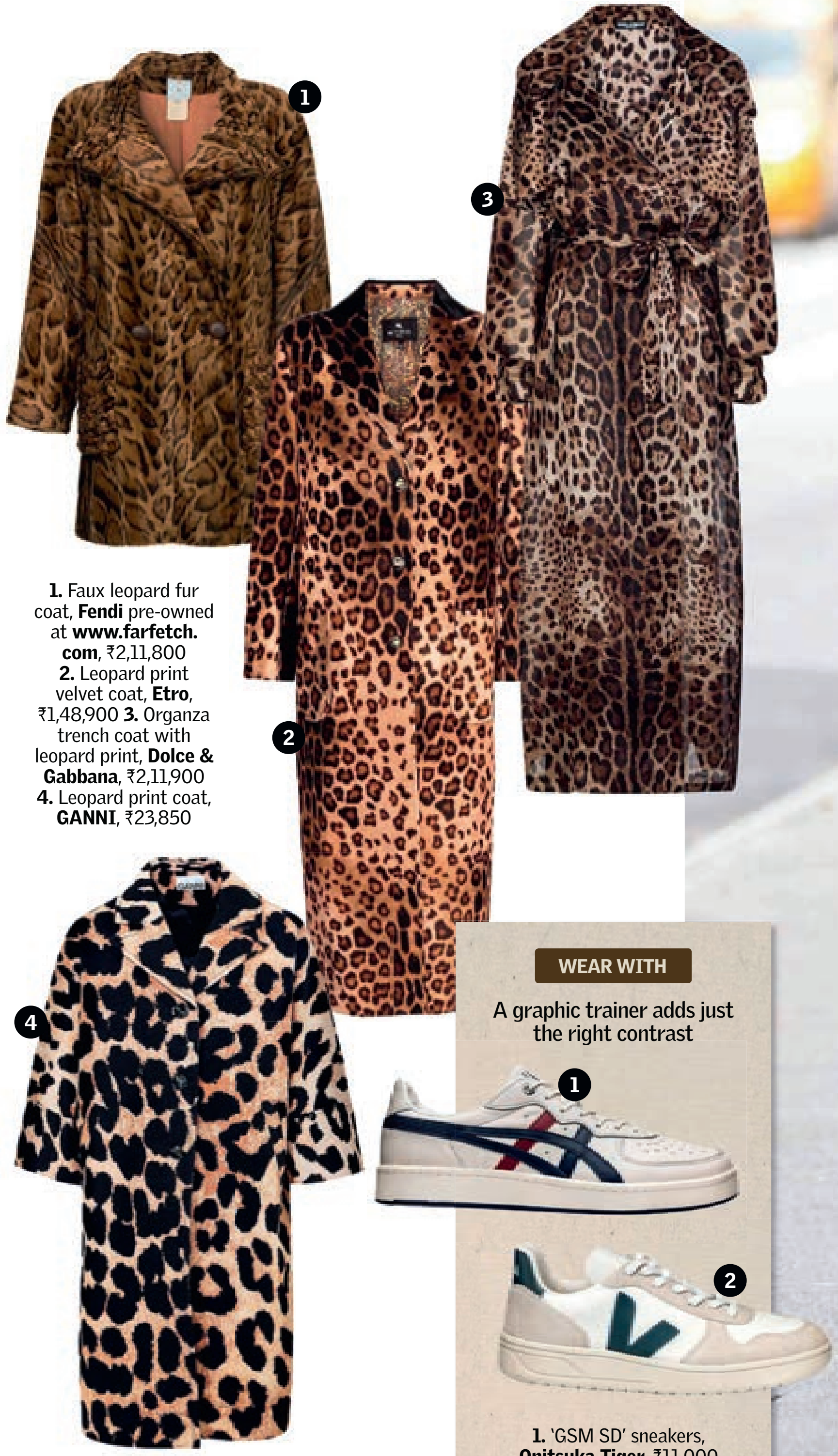
TREND

Coming home

As we go out again and navigate a new normal, these are the pieces we always return to—the classics that have a forever home in our wardrobes

PRINTED COAT

A smart leopard print can add polish to even the most casual sneakers



1. Faux leopard fur coat, **Fendi** pre-owned at **www.farfetch.com**, ₹2,11,800 **2.** Leopard print velvet coat, **Etro**, ₹1,48,900 **3.** Organza trench coat with leopard print, **Dolce & Gabbana**, ₹2,11,900 **4.** Leopard print coat, **GANNI**, ₹23,850

Kaia Gerber

GETTY IMAGES

WEAR WITH

A graphic trainer adds just the right contrast

1. 'GSM SD' sneakers, **Onitsuka Tiger**, ₹11,000 **2.** 'V-10 B-MESH' sneakers, **VEJA**, ₹9,800

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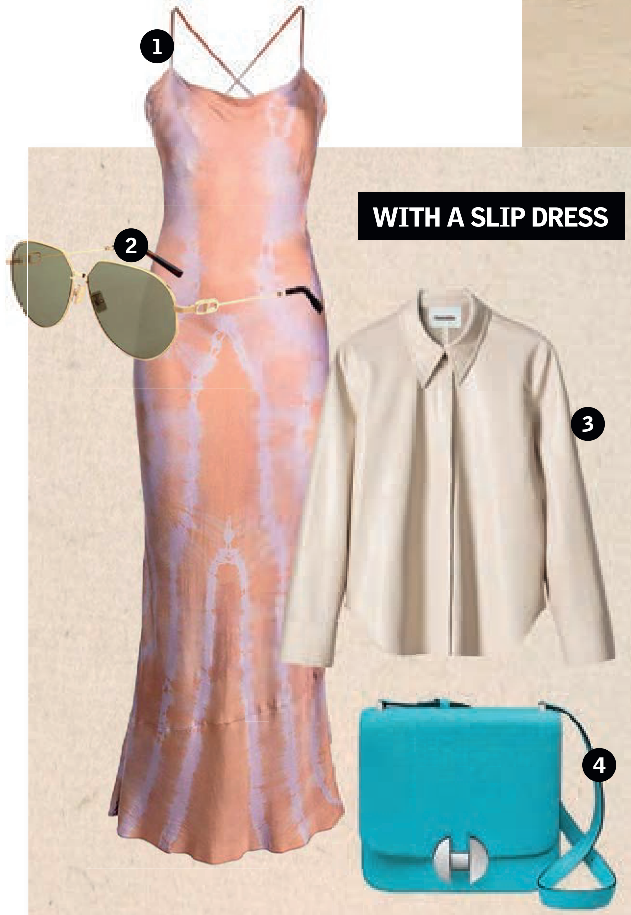
THE SHACKET

Is it a shirt? Is it a jacket? Meet the multitasking closet staple, the shacket

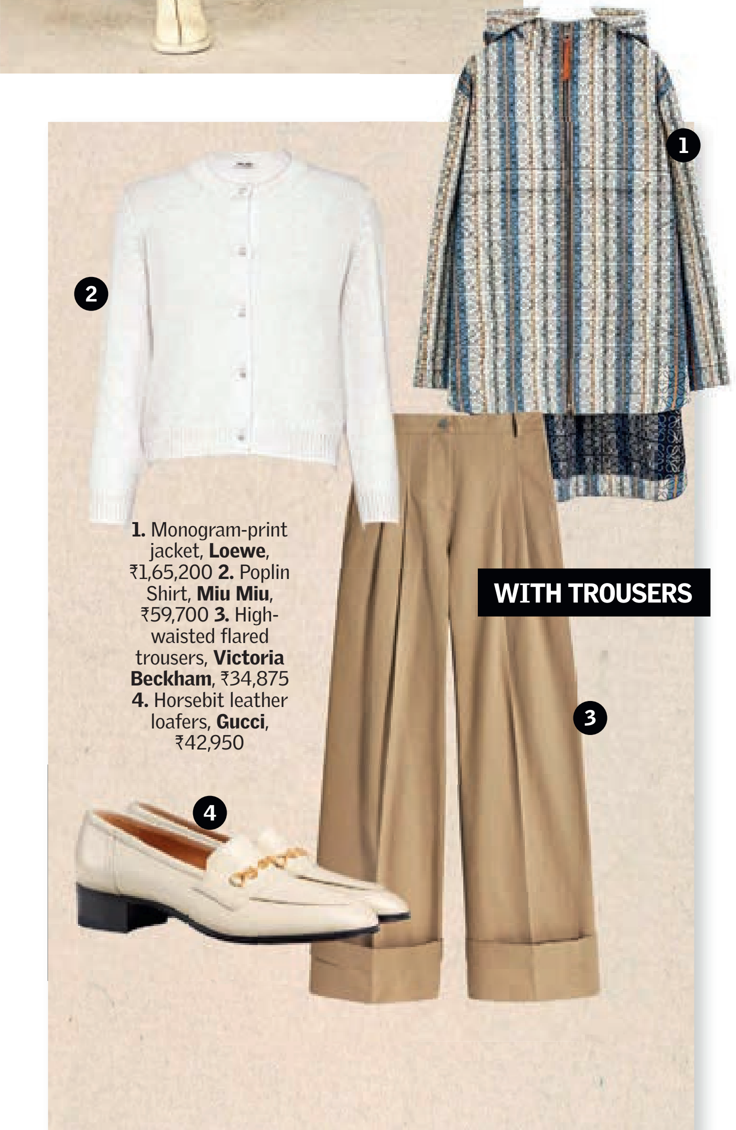
ACNE STUDIOS

WITH A SLIP DRESS



1. Tie-dye slip dress, **John Eliott**, ₹35,100 **2.** Leather shirt, **Nanushka**, ₹32,900 **3.** Green 'Pilot' sunglasses, **Dior**, ₹36,750 **4.** '2002' bag, **Hermès**, price on request

WITH TROUSERS



1. Monogram-print jacket, **Loewe**, ₹1,65,200 **2.** Poplin Shirt, **Miu Miu**, ₹59,700 **3.** High-waisted flared trousers, **Victoria Beckham**, ₹34,875 **4.** Horsebit leather loafers, **Gucci**, ₹42,950

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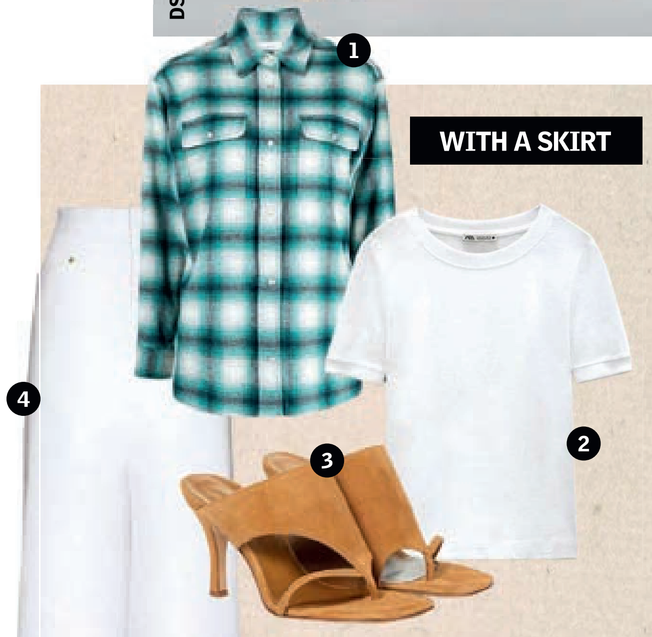
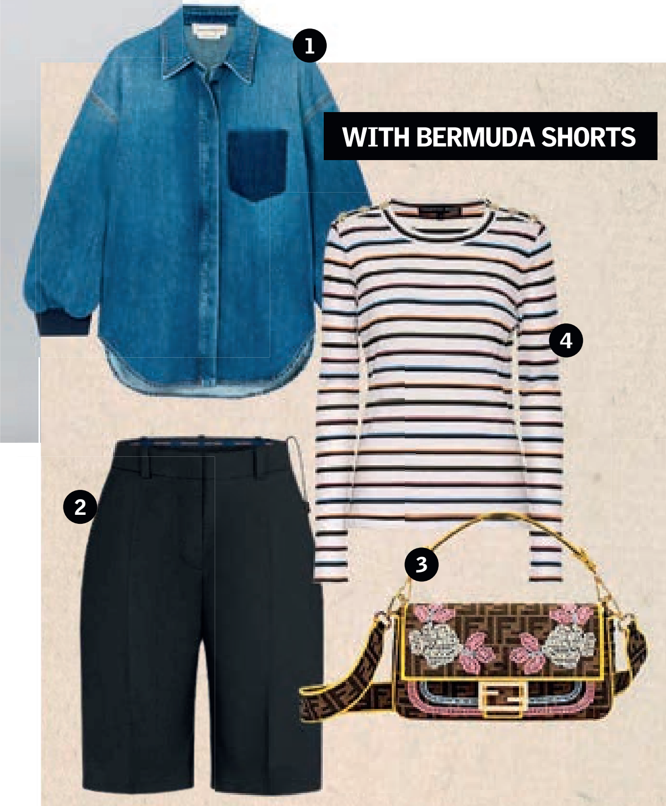
WITH A SKIRT



1. 'Reosi' shirt, **Isabel Marant**, ₹38,110 2. White ribbed T-shirt, **Zara**, ₹790 3. 'Binx' mules, **Christopher Esber**, ₹38,850 4. Denim skirt, **Frame**, price on request

WITH BERMUDA SHORTS



1. Oversized denim shirt, **Alexander McQueen**, price on request 2. Monogram Bermuda shorts, **Louis Vuitton**, price on request 3. Floral embroidery baguette, **Fendi**, ₹3,90,000 4. Striped stretch-cotton top, **Veronica Beard**, ₹9,176

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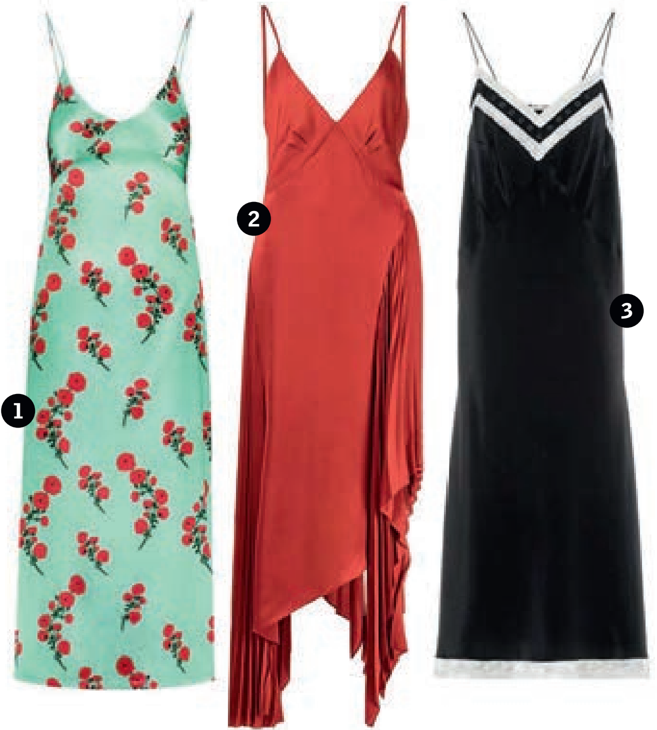
431-88 BY SHWETA KAPUR
FENDI
SUMMER SOMEWHERE

THE SLIP DRESS

The '90s slip dress is back. But did it really go away? Here are three ways to wear the versatile silhouette



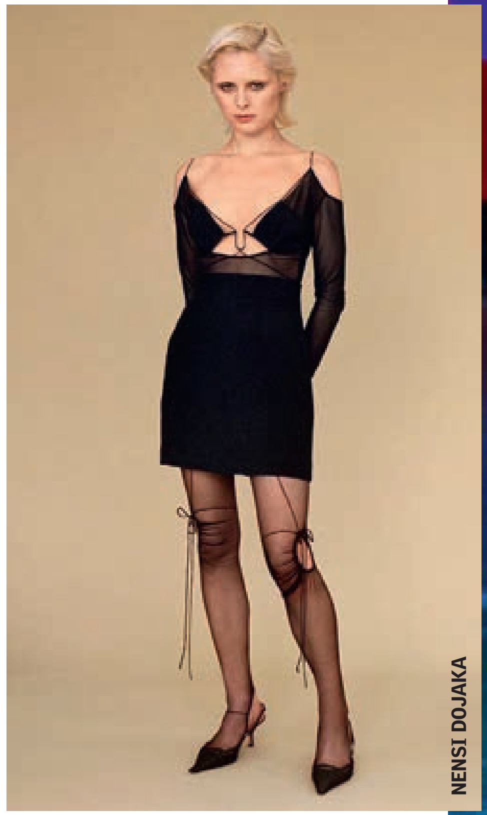
1. Silk slip dress, **Bernadette Antwerp**, price on request.
2. Pleated slip dress, **Monse**, ₹1,02,800
3. Lace slip dress, **Miu Miu** ₹1,85,628

Dress, **Miu Miu**. Jacket, scarf; both **Ralph Lauren Collection**. Shoes, **Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello**. Long earring, **Fallon Jewelry**. Ring *(on right finger)*, **Repossi**. Rings *(on right index finger)*, **Pandora**. Ring *(on left index finger and middle finger)*, **Alice Cicolini**. Ring *(on left ring finger)*, **Messika**

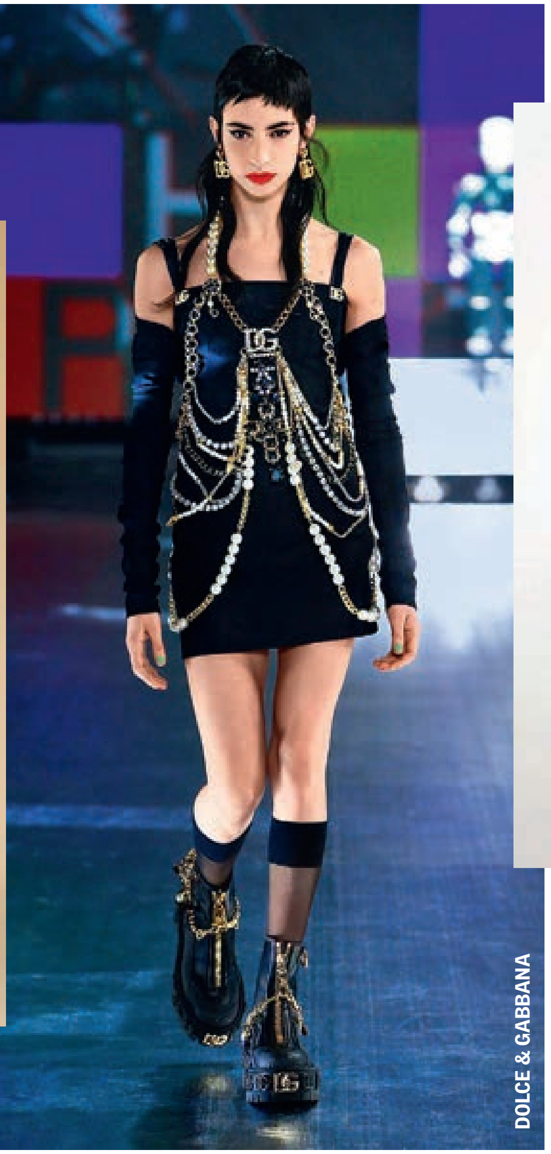
Dress, camisole; both **Miu Miu**. Necklace, earrings; both **Fallon Jewelry**. Shoes, **Gina Couture**

Dress, camisole; both **Miu Miu**. Jacket, boots; both **Celine by Hedi Slimane**. Ball necklace, **Tiffany**. Tag necklace, **Robinson Pelham**. Earrings, **Shay Jewelry**. Hat, **Dior**. Socks, **Falke**

INDIGITAL MEDIA; SCOTT TRINDLE. STYLIST: POPPY KAIN. HAIR: SYD HAYES. MAKEUP: JANEEN WITHERSPOON. MANICURE: PEBBLES AIKENS. MODEL: KEROLYN SOARES



NENSI DOJAKA

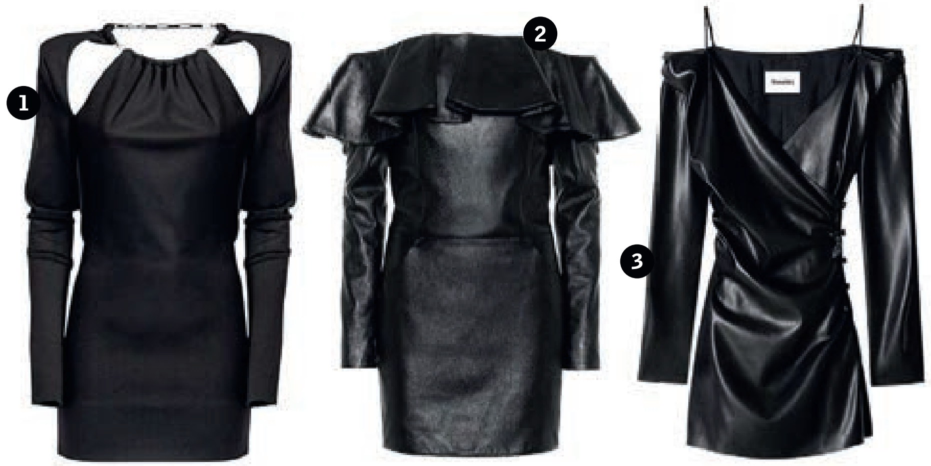


DOLCE & GABBANA

GIAMBATTISTA VALLI

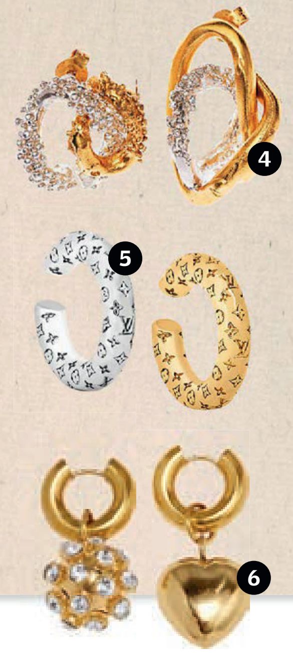
THE LITTLE BLACK DRESS

The new LBD is anything but basic. It comes in leather, wrapped, cold-shouldered and with cut-outs



WEAR WITH...

...Molten metallic hoops that come in fire and ice



1. 'Elena' minidress, **The Attico**, ₹71,850 **2.** Off-shoulder leather minidress, **Saint Laurent**, price on request **3.** Off-shoulder leather dress, **Nanushka**, ₹47,200 **4.** 'Lia' earrings, **Alighieri**, ₹35,500 **5.** Nanogram earrings, **Louis Vuitton**, ₹41,572 **6.** Gold-plated crystal hoop earrings, **Timeless Pearly**, ₹30,150

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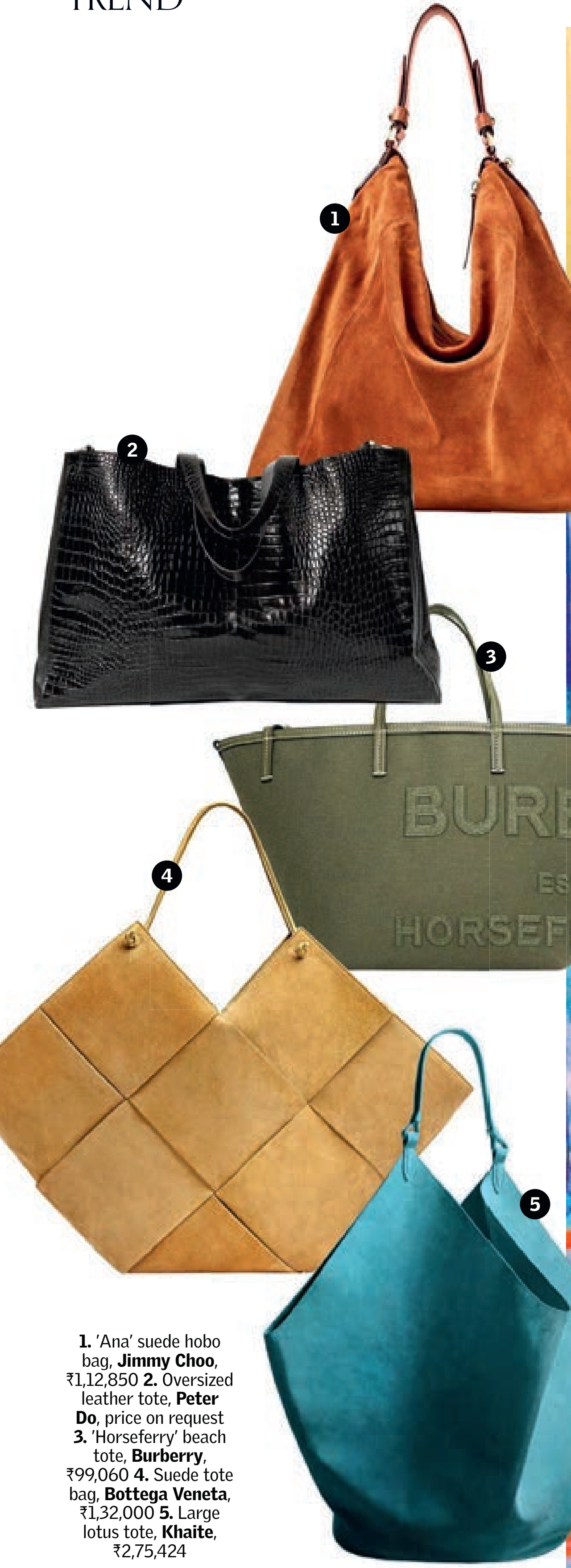

1. 'Ana' suede hobo bag, **Jimmy Choo**, ₹1,12,850 **2.** Oversized leather tote, **Peter Do**, price on request **3.** 'Horseferry' beach tote, **Burberry**, ₹99,060 **4.** Suede tote bag, **Bottega Veneta**, ₹1,32,000 **5.** Large lotus tote, **Khaite**, ₹2,75,424

MARNI
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THE SUPERSIZED BAG

Our reconfigured realities require big-bag energy. What else could be more comforting than carrying our world with us?

REFRESH YOUR WARDROBE

This holiday season, give your wardrobe favourites a long-overdue overhaul, courtesy renowned dry cleaning and cobbler services brand Pressto

The joys of travel are unparalleled. But the pandemic-induced lockdown not only forced us to spend months cooped up indoors but also rescheduled our travel plans. Obviously, your favourite leather sneakers or your most comfortable pair of heels have been gathering dust since all our plans were put on hold. But now, with the country slowly opening up, we are all looking forward to going on that much-awaited vacation to rediscover the simple pleasures of travel. So, whether you are heading for a beach vacay or a camping trip to the hills, renowned dry cleaning and cobbler services brand, Pressto is here to ensure your clothes and shoes look as good as new.

PRESSTO DRY CLEAN

Whether it is your favorite pair of denims, your go-to little black dress, or a jacket, to ensure a thorough dry clean, Pressto puts your garments through a rigorous seven-stage process that includes repairing small holes, loose hems, and minor alterations, treating stains with specialised Pressto Dry Clean agents and, finally, steam pressing them. After a final quality control check, your garments are carefully folded and presented to you in eco-friendly, plastic-free packaging. The best part? If you are one of those people who hates packing before a trip, all you need to do is say 'folded' at the store counter, and Pressto will guarantee that your clothes are fresh, wrinkle-free, and suitcase-ready.

COBBLER BY PRESSTO

Does your leather designer handbag look worn out? Or is the heel in your most favourite pair of shoes giving away? Worry not as the expert staff at Cobbler by Pressto stores will clean, repair, and restore your favourite shoes and bags using globally benchmarked methods and equipment. From adding hand-carved heel tips to help shoes last longer to replacing a worn-out sole, Pressto's extensive process starts with an inspection and involves several rounds of cleaning and polishing with the help of special cleaning agents and materials. The restoration process for bags is equally extensive—starting with cleansing and steaming the interlining, followed by shining the exterior with a special foam, and finally, a coat of leather pigment to lend it a fresh look.

At Pressto, the experts adopt responsible processes to restore your favourites to their former glory, ensuring your meticulously curated wardrobe of luxury shoes and bags lasts you a lifetime.

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2

Bestsellers from Huda Beauty to glam up your festive looks this season. Play up your eyes with The Naughty Nude Eyeshadow Palette and opt for the #FauxFilter Luminous Matte Foundation for a long-lasting base!

HUDA BEAUTY
Naughty

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PUTTY PRIMER
e.l.f.

3

Pocket friendly buys for an everyday look. Mattifying Putty Primer will leave you with a smooth, shine-free complexion! Achieve full and longer lashes with e.l.f Waterproof Lengthening & Volumizing Mascara.

pixi
skintreats
Glow Tonic

4

Pixi Glow Tonic is highly concentrated facial toner that deeply cleans pores by sweeping away excess oil and impurities. This award-winning, invigorating toner deeply cleanses and gently exfoliates all skin types.

5

Vita-C Glycolic Brightening Serum is powered by gold-stabilized Vitamin C that helps prevent visible skin damage like hyperpigmentation, dullness and uneven tone.
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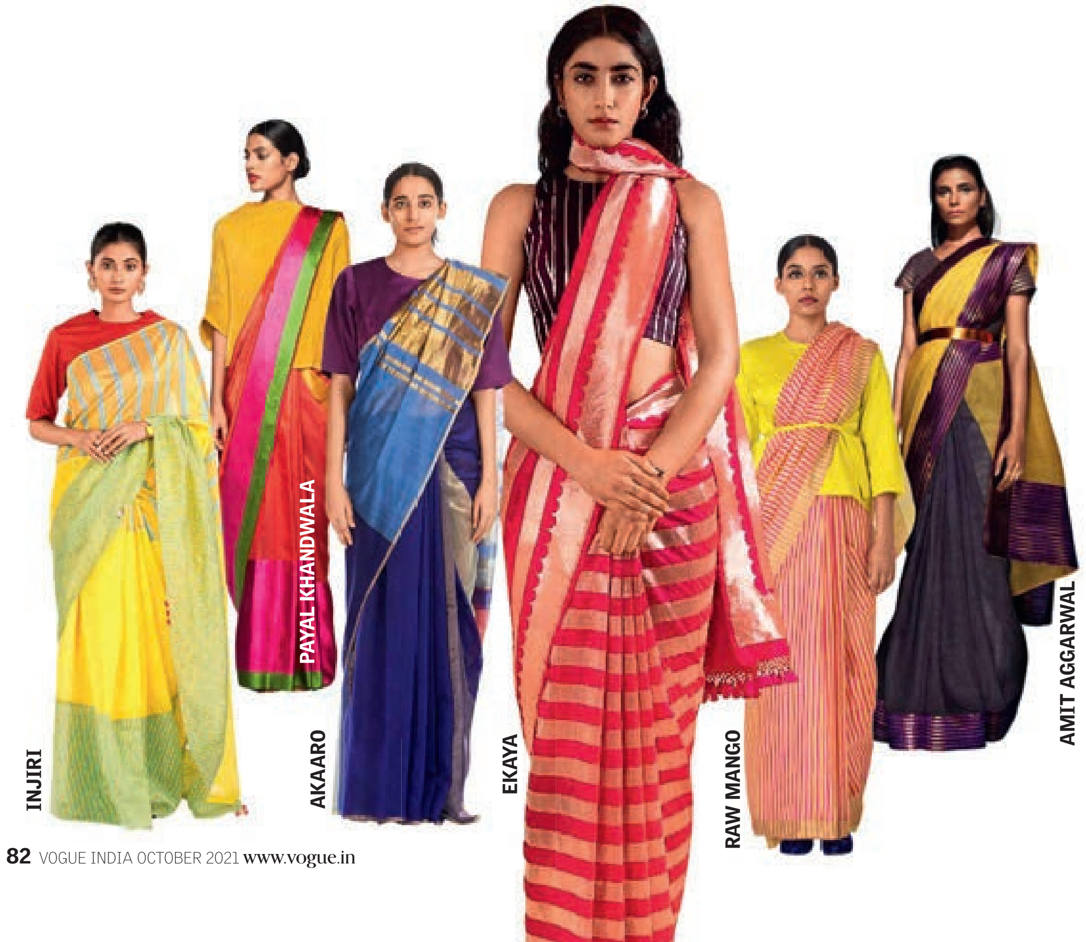
Easy does it

Not-so-socially-distant festivities are back on the calendar, and these are the closet pieces making it to our edit


INJIRI
PAYAL KHANDWALA
AKAARO
EKAYA
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AMIT AGGARWAL

STRIPED SARIS

The sari is a festive season favourite. Switch things up in a handloom version with an unconventional blouse to match

KRISTEN SCHULLER

madame

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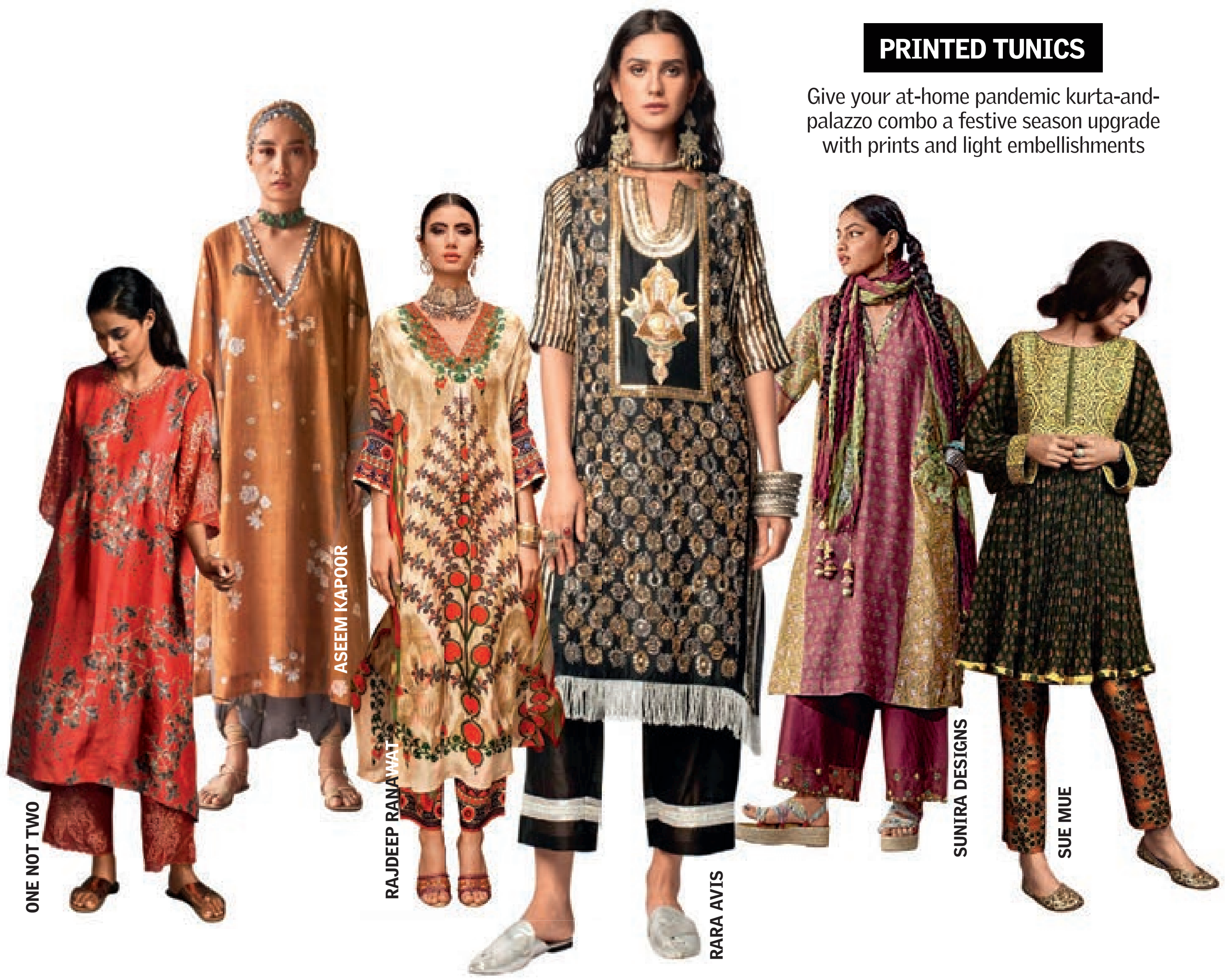
PRINTED TUNICS

Give your at-home pandemic kurta-and-palazzo combo a festive season upgrade with prints and light embellishments



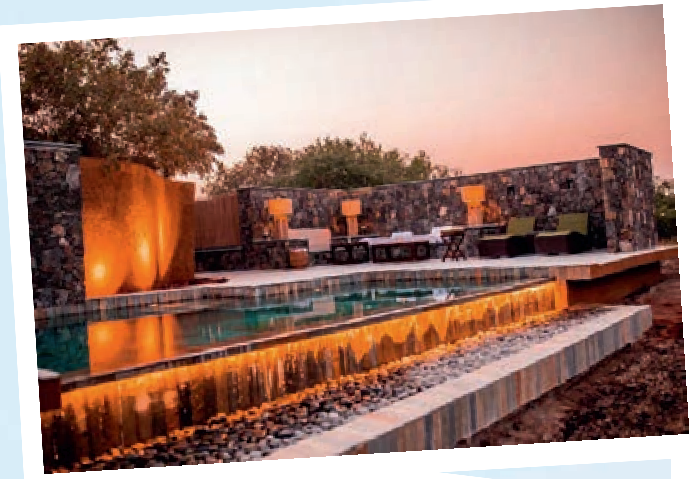
THE EXTRAS

Finish up a traditional look with accessories that shine the light on your favourite crafts

1. 'Amor Uni' drops, **Radhika Agarwal Jewels**, ₹3,100 **2.** Juttis, **Fizzy Goblet**, price on request **3.** Natural wicker kada with studded bangles, **Ritika Sachdeva**, ₹4,400 **4.** 'Petra' crescent polki earrings, **Uncut by Aditi Amin**, ₹87,000 **5.** Silver purse, **Amrapali**, ₹54,900

OF FLORA AND FAUNA

With lush vistas and the majestic brilliance of nature, the Blackbuck Lodge is sure to evoke wanderlust and inspire your next getaway



Whether you're looking to laze around on a luxurious vacation or have your sights set on embarking on an adventure, the Blackbuck Lodge has you covered. Nestled along the Velavadar National Park in the idyllic ambience of endless, lush plains, the lodge offers the unique opportunity to luxuriate in the wilderness and experience nature first-hand surrounded by the opulence of modern comforts. From gazing at the cinematic horizon, drifting between picturesque views, spotting a variety of fauna to indulging in culinary escapades—The Blackbuck Lodge casts a powerful spell and remains an iconic getaway destination for many reasons.

The lodge is blended seamlessly with the extravagant vistas of the neighbouring Velavadar National Park—the only grassland ecosystem in this part of the continent. While a myriad of species including the Indian wolf and striped hyena call these plains home, it is the blackbuck that reigns supreme. For a true immersive experience, the best time to visit this destination is from mid October to March when the weather plummets and migratory birds make their presence known. With relentless peace and nature that charms with its magic—the lodge is enthralling and a melting pot of adventures and grandeur. The lush plains invite guests for exploration or spot endangered species of birds such as Lesser Florican and Saras Crane, while true luxury awaits inside the 14 villas at the lodge. A celebration of elegance, the villas blend the boundaries between inside and outside, to seamlessly integrate with nature with rustic doors, windows, and a patio that offers a breathtaking view of the beauty of the bush. The contemporary interiors flaunt rustic elegance—polished wooden furniture and granite floors create a homey juxtaposition against rough hewn-stone walls. With its own outdoor private shower and indoor bath, each villa is bedecked with luxurious facilities that make for an immersive experience with the goodness of nature. Pool villas, scenic views of the savannah and an extravagant lounge area help get in sync with the natural surroundings.

For the adventurers, the lodge's many activities serve to be stirring escapades: embark on jungle safaris with the field naturalist to explore the wilderness, or indulge in Kathiawadi food with bush dinner under the star-lit sky for a more intimate experience. If you're looking to discover local wonders, the lodge arranges day trips to Alang, a marine salvage industry or to Lothal, one of the most important archaeological sites of the Indus Valley Civilisation. Take a day trip to Palitana, the world's only mountain with 900 temples for a spiritual excursion.

the Blackbuck Lodge
LUXURY IN THE WILDERNESS

For more information, visit
Theblackbucklodge.net

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D'DECOR RUGS
HANDS
JAIPUR RUGS
OBEETEE
PERENNIALS
ROCHE BOBOIS
THE CARPET CELLAR
TREASURES FROM THE ORIENT BY THE CARPET CELLAR

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MALLIKA'S EDIT
NIVASA
PERENNIALS
PHANTOM HANDS
PINAKIN
RALPH LAUREN HOME BY SEETU KOHLI HOME
ROCHE BOBOIS
SARITA HANDA
SCARLET SPLENDOUR
SPLENDOUR
THE PURE CONCEPT HOME
TIMOTHY OULTON
TRANCEFORME
VISIONNAIRE

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CARYSIL
EGGERSMANN BY PLÜSCH
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HÄFELE
NOVACUCINA BY STUDIO CREO
POGGENPOHL BY PLÜSCH
SIEMENS HOME APPLIANCES
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ASIAN PAINTS LIGHTING
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FLOS
HÄFELE
KLOVE
LALIQUE BY EMERY STUDIO
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LOCO DESIGN
ROCHE BOBOIS
SOGANI BY VIBHOR SOGANI
ST. LOUIS BY EMERY STUDIO
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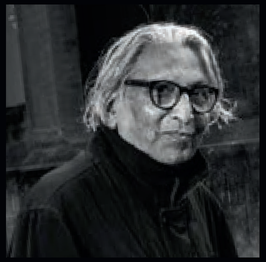
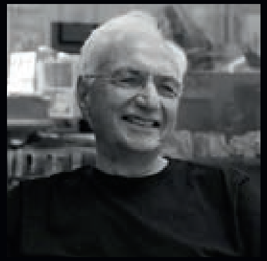
HÄFELE
LOCO DESIGN
MCM UNFIRED CLAY CLADDING
SQUARE FOOT
TOPSTONA

BHARATH RAMAMRUTHAM

BIJOY RAMACHANDRAN


BV DOSHI

EDMUND SUMNER


FRANK GEHRY

MARTHA THORNE

MAYANK MANSINGH KAUL

MEETU AKALI

NOOR DASMESH SINGH

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1 The statement maker

One massive scene-stealer is a great way to make a true emerald arrival. Let the piece be the hero of your look by pairing it with solid colours and strong silhouettes

'Alaxoa' necklace, **Cartier**

Sonam Kapoor Ahuja

Emerald city

While emeralds have been a crowd favourite over the years, here are new ways to sport the gem that will have onlookers go green with envy. By **Priyanka Parkash**

2 The chain-link bracelet

The trendiest bracelet on the block gets an emerald upgrade. Wear it either all-over emerald or with the emerald as the centre stone

Emerald chain-link bracelet, **Shay**

Emerald and 18K gold bracelet, **Anita Ko**

3 The emerald hoop

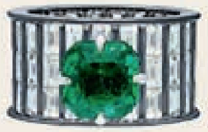
The classic hoop gets a green twist—a pair of emerald hoop earrings, glamorous and cool at the same time

Emerald and diamond earrings, **Renu Oberoi Luxury Jewellery**

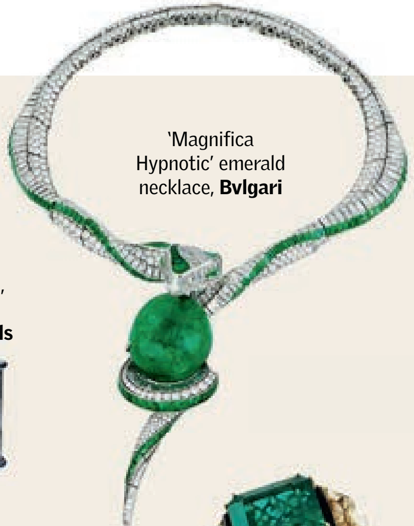
Emerald hoop earrings, **Sorellina**

GETTY IMAGES

Emeralds, diamonds, tourmalines, black spinels and pearls set in 18K gold necklace, **Sabyasachi Fine Jewellery**



Emerald and diamond ring, **Moksh Fine Unseen Jewels**

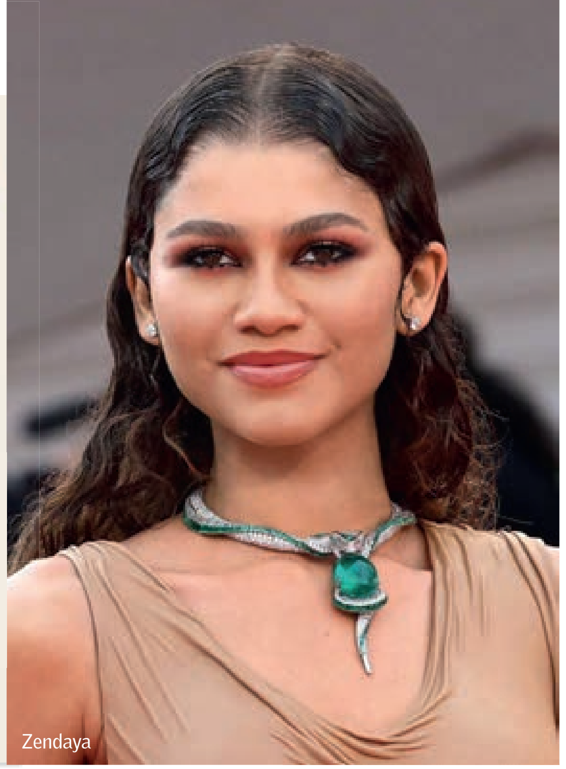


'Magnifica Hypnotic' emerald necklace, **Bvlgari**

4 The big stone

Jewellery with a giant emerald as the focal point is the best way to allow this gem to have its moment

Emerald and diamond ring, **Birdhichand Ghanshyamdas Jaipur**



Zendaya

5 The mismatched shape

Pairing differently shaped stones in the same piece of jewellery is in trend right now. Not to mention, it turns a classic cool

Angelina Jolie

Emerald earrings, **Rose**

Diamond and emerald earrings, **Anmol Jewellers**

6 The open ring

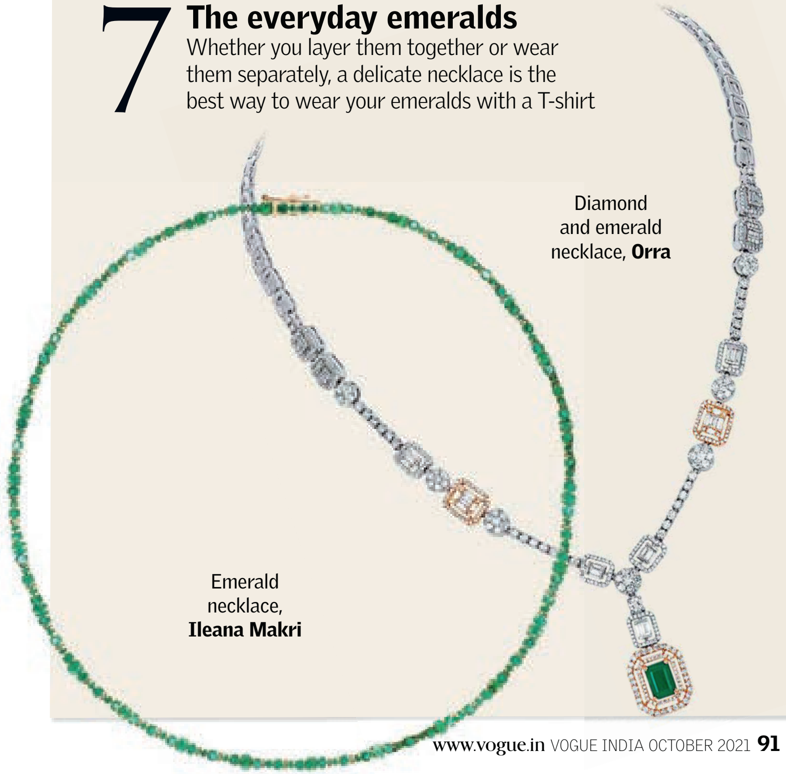
Another current hot trend, the open ring is an ideal way to wear a small dash of emeralds

'Rival' Gemfields emeralds set in 18K white gold ring, **Valani Atelier**

Zambian emerald open ring, **GFG Jewellery by Nilufer X Gemfields**

7 The everyday emeralds

Whether you layer them together or wear them separately, a delicate necklace is the best way to wear your emeralds with a T-shirt



Diamond and emerald necklace, **Orra**

Emerald necklace, **Ileana Makri**

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Cover me in sunshine

Give your soul some solar energy with these happy hues. By **Rishna Shah**

BILLY KIDD

RED

1. 'Pasha de Cartier' watch, **Cartier**
2. 'Imperiale Joaillerie' watch, **Chopard**
3. 'Seamaster Aqua Terra' watch, **Omega**

YELLOW

4. 'Slim d'Hermès La Source de Pégase' watch, **Hermès**
5. 'Royal Oak Offshore Diver' watch, **Audemars Piguet**
6. 'True Square Tej Chauhan' watch, **Rado**

ORANGE

7. 'Oyster Perpetual Day-Date 36' watch, **Rolex** **8.** 'RM 07-01 Pastel Lavender' watch, **Richard Mille**
9. 'Reine de Naples 8938 A Queen's Splendor' watch, **Breguet**

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SUSTAINABILITY AND STYLE

Fashion-forward silhouettes, distinctive colours, chunky knits and faux-fur jackets...United Colors of Benetton's Fall/Winter 2021 collection will help you master sustainable winter-dressing this season

Sophisticated. Understated. Functional. These are the three words that define United Colors of Benetton's Fall/Winter 2021 collection—a quintessential mix of effortless-yet-polished looks, that do as well in the boardroom as they do in the bar. Made in eco-friendly materials, the collection is inspired by the optimism to return to the great outdoors. And to channel that mood, a closet filled with sustainable staples that can be dressed up or down is essential—think XL coats, the covetable shacket, classic knitwear and a generous splash of defining colours and mood-boosting prints.

THE ULTIMATE WINTER COAT

If you're looking for a real statement-maker, these coats for women and men from the collection are unrivalled and will imbue your closet with colourful glamour that can be layered up or down with other pieces from the collection.

KEYSTONE ACCESSORIES

To add texture to your winter ensembles, the collection also flaunts an array of accessories that gives a fresh lift to an otherwise understated look.

MOTHER NATURE'S CHILDREN

Promising an eco-conscious ethos, United Colors of Benetton made use of sustainable fabrics such as BCI cotton, linen, lyocell, tencel, viscose, modal, and ECO gold denim which reflects the brand's proactive role and long-standing commitment when it comes to ethical and sustainable practices.

KNITWEAR, A CLASSIC

The basic backbone of any winter wardrobe is a forever-stylish knitwear collection. United Colors of Benetton's newest lineup features an array of enviable knits for the stylish woman and the debonair man.

THE HOLY GRAIL: A TIMELESS JACKET

There's no other garment in any wardrobe that gives the kind of mileage like a timeless jacket does—making it a bona-fide styling essential due to its day-to-night wearability and effortless allure, which gives them a starring role in United Colors of Benetton's covetable collection of winter must-haves.

A NEW-SEASON SPIN

The latest collection from United Colors of Benetton transforms the everyday denim from staple to statement, with an emphasis on eco-treatment denims and finishes that respect both the environment and the people who make it. The looks for jeans are equally on trend: 90s style, flared, loose fit or pleated carrot fit among others that allow you to subtly stand out from the crowd.

UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON.

For more information,
follow @benetton_india on Instagram

TREND

Frame of mind

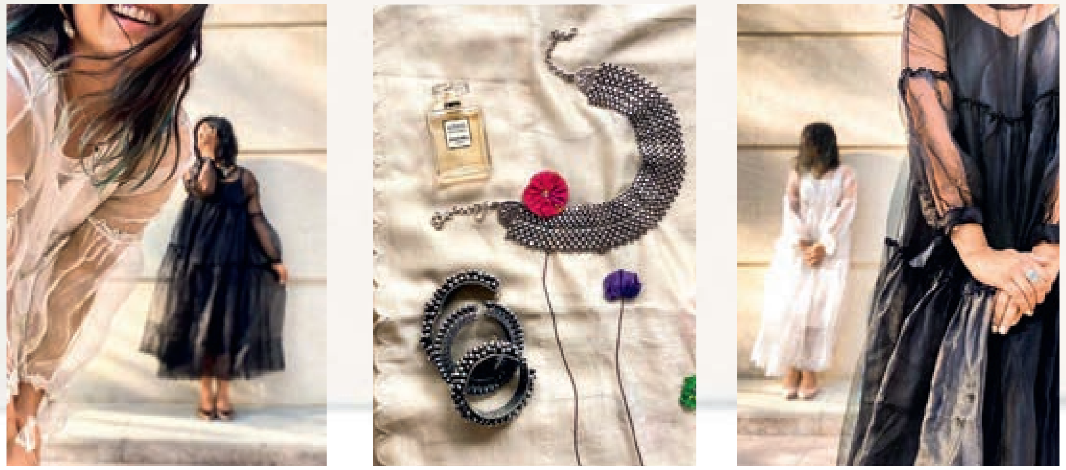
Move over, rainbow prints and sequins. The new-era, joy-inducing wardrobe is considered, crafty and in a surprising palette. We look inside the uplifting closets of four women. By **Akanksha Kamath**

Clothes do spark joy. The arrival of your shopping haul after a midnight online binge or slipping into that lucky dress for a big day ahead…the belief that clothes can make your day better is not a new one. Historically, our collective lived experiences are known to impact how we choose to dress—think of the famously flamboyant roaring twenties after the austerity of the First World War.

The ephemeral phenomenon also applied to our time in lockdown last year. Lorna Hall, director of fashion intelligence at trend forecasting agency WGSN, explains, “It was a well-being palette of pastel greens and pinks that had resonance and looked and felt right to the consumer.” According to Francesca Villa, a jewellery designer and the maker of joy-injecting jewellery, few moments in history have seen designers and consumers connect over the same goal. “Here, both creator and wearer experienced the same darkness, and both were looking for the same emotional healing,” she explains. The result has been a demand and supply of apparel made for going out and being seen in.

However, if you thought happy clothes were only about colour, sequins, prints and patterns, the optimism spectrum has broadened a smidge more. For instance, the Joy Dress by India-made, London-based contemporary luxury label Varana is made of metres of warm blush silk fabric in a trapeze shape, with no embellishments, just pockets for extra space. “The refinement yet childlike innocence emanates a quiet joy,” says its founder, designer Sujata Keshavan.

To embody this new mood of dressing for happiness, we checked in with women from around the world who are leaning into clothes for their daily dose of dopamine. Their take is unique—while for one it’s about escaping into new colour combinations, for another it’s about finding innocuous femininity, and for a sister duo who have taken to Instagram, the power of the hand-crafted is the ultimate joy-injector. We go inside their uplifting closets.



The sisters @Sooti.Dhaage keep the focus on the craft. On the left, they are wearing a Chanderi dress and sari with upcycled handmade floral appliqué

EDITED BY **PRIYANKA KHANNA**

STYLE

CRAFT-HAPPY

VINEETA AND NAMRATA GUPTA

CONTENT CREATORS, SOOTI DHAAGE

Why craft? “Our earliest memories are of the different crafts our dad would pick up from his travels, like bandhani from Rajasthan, mirror-work from Kutch, phirans from Kashmir, bangles from Hyderabad. So we associated crafts with various places across India, each of them unique and beautiful.”

@Sooti.Dhaage: “We started this page with the sole intention of sharing our love for Indian crafts, Indian labels, different silhouettes, layering, and making slow fashion look chic. We decided to not show our faces, which keeps it interesting as no one knows which sister is in the picture. It also keeps the focus on what we are wearing and what we want to say. We love to keep it this way and really have fun in the process. After all, there are only so many ways to hide your face.”

How do clothes bring you joy? “For us, dressing up is an amalgamation of so many things. Different colours bring different emotions—some colours make us happy, some colours bring calm, some make a statement and some hues connect to certain memories. Based on our engagement, we feel hopeful that the new generation is interested and will take these crafts forward. We see a lot of work happening in adapting to the latest trends, keeping them relevant and making them affordable so that these crafts can find their place in the world of fast fashion.” >

Billie Bhatia wearing a ruffled and tiered dress she designed and a Simone Rocha bow in her hair

"Dopamine dressing, in whatever form, is a crucial reminder that getting dressed is for me and no one else"

—BILLIE BHATIA

FINDING FEMININITY

BILLIE BHATIA

FASHION FEATURES EDITOR, STYLIST MAGAZINE

"Pre-pandemic, my wardrobe predominantly hinged on casual comfort. Most days, I would be travelling around London for work, so my go-to uniform was slip skirts, sweatshirts and trainers. However, having lived in elasticated waistbands and tracksuits over the past 18 months, my outlook on clothes and the emotional impact they can have has evolved into something less practical and much more joyful. I didn't realise how much I missed the art of getting dressed, particularly getting dressed up, until it was made redundant. So now I revel in the opportunity to go big on statement dresses, jewellery, hair accessories and prints. But comfort is still key—I won't ever feel confident in my clothes unless I am comfortable, which means I seek out oversized flowing dresses and shapes and wear them with chunky sandals or sleek trainers. I even designed a dress this summer for a friend's wedding that was exaggerated tiers of ditsy printed fabric. This kind of dopamine dressing is easy to do in summer, but in winter it's harder to celebrate its romanticism. Accessories come into play more—a velvet bow in my hair or pearl-drop earrings give a sense of femininity to jeans and a cashmere jumper. Over the years, I have become more at ease with myself in clothes that garner attention. Whereas before I might have dressed quietly so as to not draw attention to myself, this trend of dopamine dressing (in whatever form it might be) is a crucial reminder that getting dressed is for me and no one else."

Grece Ghanem injects colour into her wardrobe in a new way, moving away from swirling printed and patterned colourways

"I wear colour when feeling down, to add some cheer and to manifest brighter days"

—GRECE GHANEM

NEW COLOURWAYS

GRECE GHANEM

FASHION CONTENT CREATOR AND MODEL

"I am not afraid of having all sorts of pieces of colour"

I find wearing colour can enhance my happiness and increase my confidence. I wear colour when feeling down to add some cheer to my step, like I am manifesting brighter days. I have a multifaceted tonal collection as well as bold vibrant colours, whether flared trousers, a lace blouse or a suit.

"Great style is getting to know yourself better over the years"

I've always had a penchant for elevated basics, power prints, bold colours and mix-and-match. But as I grow older, I get to know what looks better in terms of fit and have built a wardrobe of quality pieces over time.

"The clothes we wear are the force behind our character"

It's never too late to experiment and find one's style. Make the clothes, do not let the clothes make you. I usually lay the foundation of my look around one piece, for example, a great colourful trench or accessory. Then I make the rest quiet and subtle around it. My centerpiece must speak for itself. ■

Gucci gang

As the Italian house celebrates its 100th birthday, we've seen the double G's disrupting fashion and dropping it like it's hot. Gucci may be getting older, but its customers are getting younger. Could this be the secret to its success, wonders **Rishna Shah**

A few months ago, my seven-year-old son bought his first Gucci hat. It was a limited-edition Wide Brim Felt Hat that he purchased virtually in Roblox, a video game with over 43 million daily users that's valued at US$47 billion. He logged in at a certain time on a certain date (the hat was only available for a one-hour window at a Gucci Garden event) and he paid 120 Robux (Roblox's online currency) for his first fashion purchase. He then FaceTimed all his friends urging them to do the same. As a mother, I was mind-blown that he used real money to buy a pretend hat. But I was also secretly proud of him. At least he bought a limited-edition one. At least he bought Gucci. At least he bought a brand that at the age of 100 still hasn't lost its relevance.

Founded by Guccio Gucci in Florence in 1921, the small family business specialised in equestrian gear, luggage and handbags in its early days. By the 1950s, the brand began gaining momentum with its catchy GG monogram logo, trademark green and red stripe banner and a half-moon shaped bag favoured by Jacqueline Kennedy. Family disputes and a sleepy stint later, American designer Tom Ford was summoned in the 1990s to spice things up and bring in some much-needed glitz, glamour and sex appeal. By the mid '90s, Ford had managed to improve sales by 90 per cent and dial up the heat with a provocative ad campaign featuring a 'G' logo shaved in a model's crotch. In 1999, when luxury conglomerate Kering decided to acquire the Gucci group, things were looking good. Ford's exit brought in Frida Giannini, the woman behind the 'Flora' floral handbags and the red tattoo heart logo. She ran the show until 2015, when Gucci made another bold move by appointing Alessandro Michele as the next creative director. And the rest, as they say, is history.

From the start, Michele's messages have been loud and clear: expect the unexpected. He's the brains behind the tongue-in-cheek Guccy (yes, you read that right) campaign, the 'Real' or 'Fake' graffiti on logo bags and giving the historic horse-bit loafers a second chance at life (think furry mules). Sometimes, his models carry baby dragons on the runway, sometimes they carry a replica of their own head. He's swapped the conventional fashion calendar with seasonless shows, resurrecting looks like Gwyneth Paltrow's 1996 red velvet suit for the Gucci Aria collection earlier this year. He's also big in pop culture, dressing stars like Harry Styles, Jared Leto and Billie Eilish. For Michele, Gucci is so much more than Italian craftsmanship, it's a lifestyle. Forget millennials and Gen Z, he has taken the double G's straight to Gen Alpha. As the brand celebrates a century, here are 10 ways Gucci is blowing out the candles. >

GUCCI
GUCCI
F. GABRIELLI

This page: Prince Rainer of Monaco and his wife, Grace Kelly, visiting the Gucci store in Rome in 1959. *Opposite page:* Creative director Alessandro Michele

COURTESY VALENTINA SOMMARIVA; GETTY IMAGES

BALENCIAGA

1

GUCCI BELOVED

Comedian James Corden filmed content for Gucci in the form of 'The Beloved Show', a comical take on his popular talk show. He welcomed guests like Dakota Johnson, Diane Keaton, Serena Williams and Harry Styles on stage dressed head-to-toe in Gucci gear and wearing a 'beloved' bag of choice, from the iconic GG Marmont to the bestselling Dionysus. If this isn't creative genius, we don't know what is.

2

GUCCI HACK

While the pandemic was a moment of pause for most, Gucci was hard at work, churning out collaborations with North Face, Ken Scott and Doraemon to name a few. But the one partnership that really went viral was from the Gucci Aria show, where Michele combined forces with Balenciaga as a hack or power play of sorts, toying with the notion of theft and metamorphism with what he described as a "hacking lab". The collection was explosive, to say the least. With both logos out on display, it almost broke the internet. We have a feeling this isn't the last of it.

3

GUCCI DIANA

The bamboo bag was first presented in 1991 and was famously carried by Lady Diana. Today's version is a namesake to the late princess with an extra accessory: neon belts that wrap around the handles. The pop of fluorescence is an unexpected contrast to the polished bamboo and boxy silhouette, which comes in three sizes and seven colours. It's also quickly becoming a celebrity favourite: Kiara Advani likes hers large and light blue while Elle Fanning likes hers small and pink.

Sienna Miller
Jodie Turner-Smith
Emma Marrone
Elle Fanning
Kiara Advani

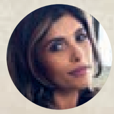
HOUSE OF GUCCI

4

Next month, the legacy can be seen on the silver screen, starring Lady Gaga, Adam Driver, Jared Leto and Al Pacino. Directed by Ridley Scott, the movie is an adaptation of the book *The House Of Gucci: A Sensational Story Of Murder, Madness, Glamour, And Greed* by Sara Gay Forden. If the trailer hasn't sent chills up your spine already, the costumes sure will.

CLOSET CHRONICLES

Three fashionistas reveal the Gucci pieces they've been holding on to for years



"A vintage piece that has a special memory for me is a black suede backpack with a bamboo handle from the 1990s. For me, Gucci looks into the past with a viewpoint that is wondrously fashion-forward."

—Roohi Oomerbhoy Jaikishan, Director RRO

"Two timeless bags that I have are a vintage silver clutch from 2003 with an emerald buckle and a brown horse bit shoulder bag from 2010. I also recently bought the classic Diana tote."

—Jaya Raheja, interior designer

"I have a beautiful black winter dress that comes just below the knee and has gold clinched buckles on the waist. I've had it since 2011, but it is still timeless, classic and chic, which I love."

—Karisma Kapoor, actor

GETTY IMAGES

GUCCI ARCHIVES

5

Next time you're in Florence, you'll want to drop a pin at Via delle Caldaie, the new address for the Gucci archives. Housed in the 15th-century Palazzo Settimanni, step into Gucci's 100-year journey with its most prized pieces across five floors. From vintage handbags to rare jewellery, famous footwear to antique artefacts, this palace is a treasure trove of Gucci's glory. "I envisaged it as a sort of secret place within the House, an inner sanctum from where one sets out for Gucci's holy lands," explains Michele.

GUCCI ALTERNATIVES

6

Say hello to Demetra, Gucci's groundbreaking new eco-friendly, primarily plant-based material. Made in Italy, it took two years of in-house research and development to perfect the luxurious concoction without compromising on texture and durability. Look out for this leather alternative in several categories soon, including the drool-worthy Basket high-top sneakers, and for products in the 'Gucci Off The Grid' line that promote recycled, bio-based and sustainably sourced materials.

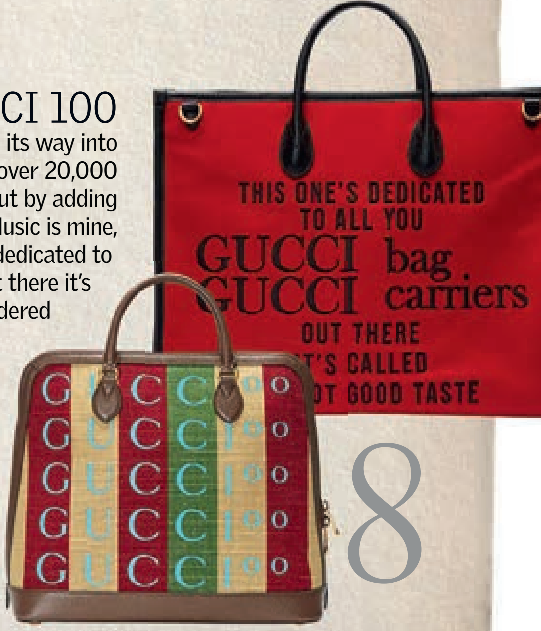
GUCCI GARDEN

7

If you thought Gucci's portfolio couldn't diversify any wider, you thought wrong. A creative lab of sorts, Gucci thinks outside the box under its Gucci Garden Archetypes innovative banner. A perfect example? Transforming a Florentine palazzo into a fragrance atelier selling 1,000 numbered limited-edition eau de parfums.

GUCCI 100

The word Gucci has definitely found its way into the urban dictionary and as a lyric in over 20,000 songs. Michele embraces the shoutout by adding the catchphrases to his pieces. 'Music is mine, Gucci seats reclined' and 'This one's dedicated to all you Gucci bag Gucci carriers out there it's called you got good taste,' are embroidered onto accessories, alongside a dedicated 'Gucci 100' logo that has us switching to party mode.



8

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GUCCI GOES GREEN

The company strives to leave a lighter footprint with 95-per-cent overall traceability of materials, eco-friendly packaging and renewable energy consumption. It recently surpassed its environmental reduction target for 2025, four years ahead of schedule. ■

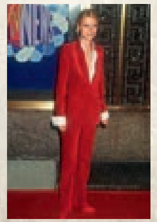
GUCCI WATCHMAKING

Gucci has been crafting watches in Switzerland since 1972. This year it has elevated its game by creating its first in-house movement, a major milestone in horology. The technical feat can be seen in the 'GUCCI 25H' mechanical watch featuring a tourbillon, a genderless physique and an ergonomic case.

10

SIGN OF THE TIMES

Take a trip down memory lane with these red-carpet looks



1990s
Gwyneth Paltrow's velvet look from 1996 went viral again this year with a comeback on the catwalk

2000s
Rihanna's fun mini dress with a corset belt summarised 2007 perfectly

2010s
Billie Eilish's custom look from 2019 featured a monogram and metallics

2020s
Harry Styles may be in 2021 but he brought retro back with a groovy '70s-style suit

Stepping up

These young labels are bringing a unique design perspective to conversations around craft and community

Lukhanyo Mdingi

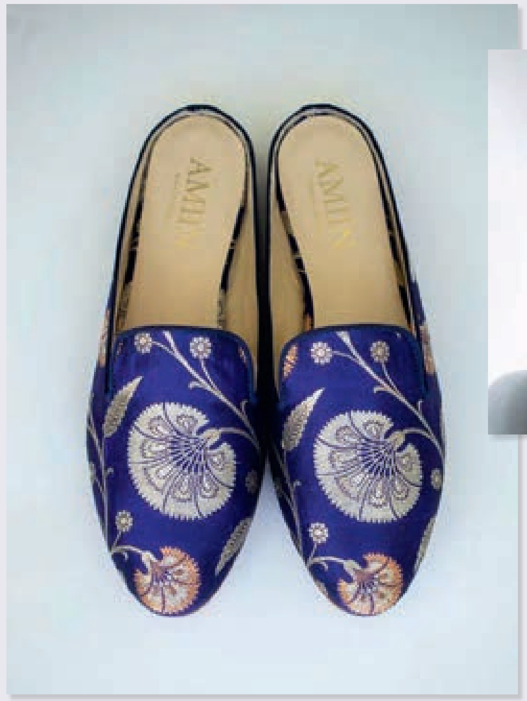
Friendship, love and community are the driving forces behind **Lukhanyo Mdingi's** craft-rich collections, says **Navaz Batliwalla**

"Luxury to us means having the time to create something based on collaboration, together with the spirit of consideration and mindfulness," says Lukhanyo Mdingi, South Africa's latest, greatest export. "The world is moving at a discordant pace. To be in a state of peace and complete clarity in the mind is the ultimate luxury. I believe whatever creation comes from this can be a sublime labour of love."

Born in East London, on the southeast coast of South Africa, Mdingi graduated from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in 2015, taking his love for function, wearability and craftsmanship to the international stage. But he is emphatic that great design cannot be achieved alone; his best collection yet, an accomplished orchestration of timeless silhouettes, colour artistry and woven textiles is inspired by his late friend and peer, Nicholas Coutts.

Essential tailoring, felted outerwear pieces and vibrant textiles pay tribute to Coutts's artisanal sensibility. Along with long-time textile collaborator Stephanie Bentum, whose felting techniques rely on an intimate 'conversation' between the artisan's hand and the wool, ignited a desire to draw on the skills of South African female hand-knitting and weaving communities.

Support has come from the British Fashion Council and Pitti Uomo, and as a finalist for the 8th LVMH Young Designer Prize, yet Mdingi remains humble: "We don't think too much about the long-term," he admits. "The secret to our success? Know who you are. Always do the right thing. And be a means of service to others." *@lukhanyomdingi*



"It is true of so many global South Asians who identify with more than one culture. I wanted to create a brand that truly represents me"
—AMEENA BAJAR

Amiin

Indian and Italian craftsmanship merge beautifully in this made-to-order footwear label by **Ameena Bajar**, says **Praachi Raniwala**

Necessity, they say, is the mother of invention. It's what led to the inception of luxury footwear label Amiin, too. When its founder and creative director Ameena Bajar could not find the right pair of handcrafted shoes on a trip to Italy in 2019, she decided to make them herself. "Europe has always been my go-to for shoe shopping. But I was frustrated by the options during my last trip," she admits. "I looked everywhere but only found more of the same. A unique point of view was missing."

THE FIRST STEP

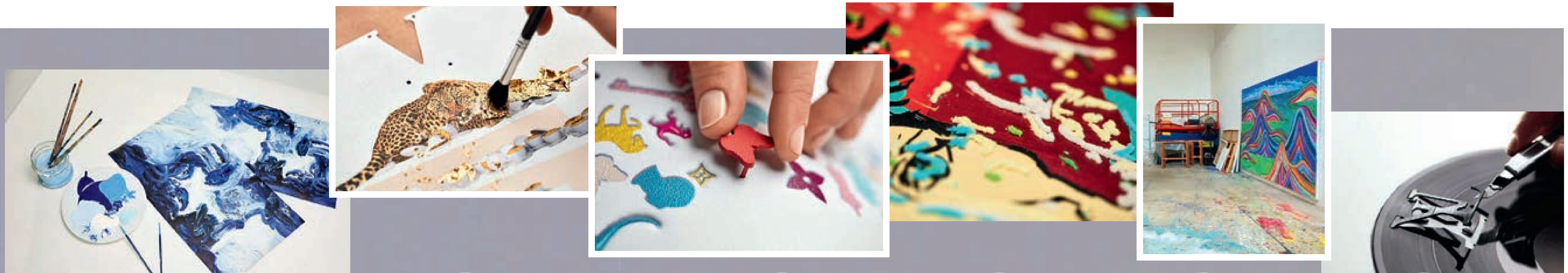
Bajar incubated the label back home in Toronto. Part Indian and part British-French, she wanted to draw on her unique heritage. "It is true of so many global South Asians who identify with more than one culture. I wanted to create a brand that truly represents me." The end result? A limited-edition range of flats, combining rich Indian fabrics and embroidery, and Italy's made-by-hand expertise.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Amiin features two collections, Summer In Benares, which uses single-edition Banarasi fabrics, and Global, which that captures the spirit of inspiring cities across the world with zardozi embroidery. The detailing is crafted in India and then shipped to Florence, where it is added to soft Italian leather mules and smoking slippers. Is the treatment deliberately androgynous? "Yes! I love these styles for their comfort. It's also my way of saying women don't always need to wear heels," says Bajar. "I didn't want to wait until the festive season to wear something with an Indian touch." The Lucknow mule, inspired by Mughal gardens, has become a bestseller, as have the monogrammed London slippers and mules. "They are inspired by fall in the city. The vibe is very drinks-at-a-hotel-lobby-bar-in-Notting-Hill."

ALONG CAME A PANDEMIC

Launching a new label during a pandemic is no small feat. More so when your operations are spread across different continents, with your headquarters (Toronto, where Bajar lives) in a third. Her travel plans to meet vendors in India and Italy were put on hold indefinitely. "The silver lining is that we have been able to support our artisans, especially since we only work with small family-owned businesses." *@worldofamiin* ■



SAVOIR FAIRE
In the third edition of Louis Vuitton's Artycapucines, six international artists, put their spin on the classic design

Artistic expressions

Louis Vuitton's third Artycapucines collection brings together six international artists to use the house's iconic design as a canvas.

By **Chandni Sehgal**

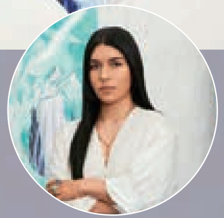
Imagine walking around with a textured Vincent Van Gogh self-portrait on your arm. Or a tactile *Alice In Wonderland*-esque handbag dotted with a fantastical menagerie of everything from sea horses to dinosaurs to aliens—the bag taking you on a journey even before you set out with it.

If a bag from French fashion house Louis Vuitton wasn't already on your wish list, or in your growing collection, these new offerings, in collaboration with some of the world's most cutting-edge art talent, will be.

The legend of the Capucines precedes it. The leather version of the classic LV trunks bag, named after the first Louis Vuitton store on Rue Neuve-des-Capucines in Paris, debuted in autumn/winter 2013-14, with actor Michelle Williams as the face of the line. Retaining the vintage boxy shape, it angled out like a trapezoid, quickly cementing itself as a timeless style.

In 2019, Louis Vuitton collaborated with six artists to reinterpret the design, debuting the first Artycapucines collection. Now in its third edition, a roster of six international talents—Zeng Fanzhi, Gregor Hildebrandt, Donna Huanca, Vik Muniz, Paola Pivi and Huang Yuxing joined forces with the brand to deliver their own contemporary spin on the Capucines. With its distinctive design and silhouette, the Capucines provided the ideal canvas for the artists to turn into a definitive artwork. Here's a first look at these collector's edition pieces. ■

All prices on request



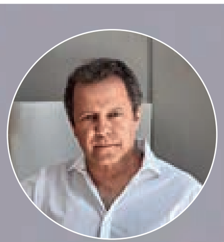
Donna Huanca

At first gaze, Donna Huanca's Capucines plunges you into a hypnotic, tactile sea of blue. On closer inspection, the artist's dalliance with the skin and body, particularly the female form as artistic media, comes to life. Based on *Cara de Fuego* and *Muyal Jol*, two paintings that continue her investigation into painting's interaction with the female body, the artworks and their paint-based tactile effects are 3D-printed onto the bag. Certain sections are embroidered while others are selectively hand-painted to echo her signature layering effects, all in shades of blue and white, typical of the artist. The metal hoops resemble oversized body-piercing rings. Like its source of inspiration (the female form) the bag is layered in symbolism, leaving it up to the wearer to best interpret it.

Paola Pivi

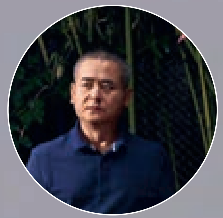
Any woman will tell you that the addition of pockets to clothing thrills beyond measure. Artist Paolo Pivi understands that pragmatism, adding, in a first, safari-inspired pockets onto the bag's exterior. The multidisciplinary artist's expertise lies in altering the scale, position or situation of common objects and using them in novel ways, challenging the audience to rejig their world view. She playfully investigates animals and their representation, resulting in works like a leopard taking a graceful stroll among dozens of cappuccinos. Inspired by her 2007 work *One Cup Of Cappuccino Then I Go*, a striking leopard is embroidered and then overprinted to create a three-dimensional rendering, with 30 cups and saucers in porcelain-like patent leather and froth made in delicate gold-coloured lambskin and gilded with gold leaf.

THOMAS LOHR; CHARLES NEGRE; CHRISTOPHE COENON; ZENG FANZHI; VICTORIA HUTCHINSON



Vik Muniz

If Lewis Carroll were a bag designer, then Vik Muniz's version of the Capucines would be his *Alice In Wonderland*. Muniz has worked in sculpture, photography, drawing and film, often using found materials—chocolate, toys, magazines, scrap metal, soil, and pigments—to recreate images from art history and popular culture. He was inspired by his 2019 series of delicate arrangements of fragile paper-cut pieces, *Quasi Tutto*, for this rendition, where 154 fantastical and whimsical charms are scattered across white leather, creating an arresting trompe l'oeil effect—from a dinosaur to an alien to the house's logo, some added using embossed inkjet printing while others are inlaid using marquetry techniques. Heritage leather is also reused, in line with Muniz's conscious approach. With an interior lined in a sunny yellow, the bag is a true pocketful of sunshine.



Zeng Fanzhi

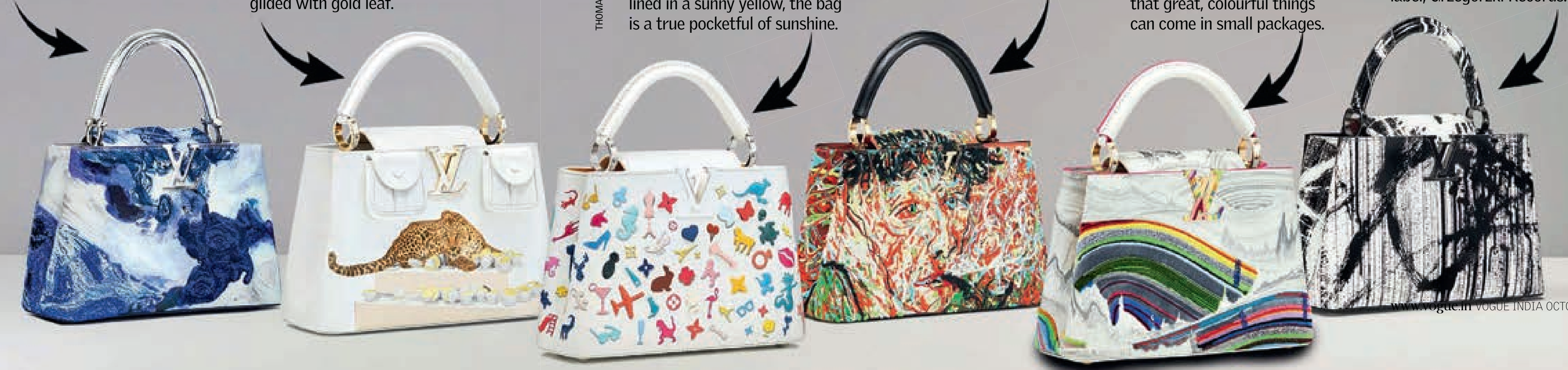
Contemporary Chinese artist Zeng Fanzhi's work combines Chinese and Western traditions in a constantly evolving emotive style through lush, tactile brushstrokes. A lifelong fan of Van Gogh, he worked on a unique exhibition that pairs the legendary paintings of the post-impressionist with his own interpretations. His vivid take is based on a dramatic reinterpretation of a Van Gogh self-portrait he created in 2017, rendered using a variety of embroidery techniques, a textured and tactile 3D surface featuring 42 coloured threads that captures Fanzhi's signature brushstrokes. The black satin inner lining is partially printed with similar brushstrokes to the exterior, making the bag as beautiful both inside and out.

Huang Yuxing

Huang Yuxing's Capucines is infused with a spirit of optimism, using the rainbow as a symbol of a brighter tomorrow. The Chinese artist, whose style is grounded in delicate traditional Chinese Gongbi painting, uses the style's realism and expressive use of colour to build layered, dazzling landscapes and abstract still lifes of lakes, forests, mountains, rivers, sunrises and sunsets. Based upon a specially reworked version of his 2019 painting *The Colossus Hidden Deep In The Hills*, the outline is first printed onto white-grey leather and embroidered with grey thread to add perspective. The rainbow-like mountains are created using differing depths of tufting-stitch embroidery, resulting in an exuberant, BB Capucines that reminds you that great, colourful things can come in small packages.

Gregor Hildebrandt

German contemporary artist Gregor Hildebrandt stays true to his monochrome aesthetic and predilection for using vinyl, audio and video tape. For his bag, he employs his trademark 'rip off' technique using magnetic dust from old recording tape to create striking black-and-white images. His original artwork is meticulously screen-printed onto the blank Capucines, a 'positive' black-and-white version on the front and 'negative' white-and-black image on the back. The LV signature in black gunmetal is inlaid with actual vinyl records. Pop open the bag for a hot pink surprise: the interior is lined entirely in leather, dyed in the same vibrant pink as the logo of Hildebrant's record label, Grzegorzki Records.



Two's company

Virtual check-ins, venting by the water cooler and no-context-needed conversations at the workplace are only exciting and meaningful when you have a partner in crime to share it with. *Vogue* India explores how a work wife can be your happy place. By **Akshara Subramanian**

Ever found yourself leaving thoughtful Post-it notes for a colleague, covering for them when they're sick, playing the role of a therapist or missing them at the office when they're not around? We're seeing the rise of the 'work spouse' globally as more women find their 'work soulmates', inevitably depending on them as the singular source of comfort at the workplace and outside of it. Even in this time of Zoom and #WFH, a work wife is essentially a workplace go-to—someone who inspires you, keeps you sane and cheers you on. These co-founders are no different. Whether they're friends who went into business together or met by chance and built a brand, one thing remains certain—their work wives are their safe space. They talk about why the best partnerships come in pairs.

Shilpa Shah and Karla Gallardo

KARLA GALLARDO AND SHILPA SHAH

CO-FOUNDERS, CUYANA

How they met: "We met serendipitously on a tour of Stanford University, where Karla was a second-year B-school student and I was a prospective student," says Shah. "I introduced myself as an interaction designer and mother. At the time, she was working on a product for mothers, for which she happened to need an interaction designer." They worked on it together, and two years later they were building Cuyana.

The secret sauce: "Having the same values, a commonality in work ethic and complementary skill sets are important. While Karla is more analytical, I'm the storyteller," says Shah. They've been able to rely on each other in every aspect of their lives, from dancing at a club in Madrid after a conference to sharing the birth of their children and travelling the world on business. "There's incredible ease that is only attained by going through the trenches together. We know each other so well that we can often finish each other's sentences."

Balancing act: "Have clear ownership of responsibilities, respect opinions, compliment one another often and celebrate the wins," says Gallardo. They're diligent about not taking things too personally. "Show compassion to your co-founder and allow space and agility at every iteration of the business. Most importantly, leave your creative differences at work and don't let it alter the friendship."

Karuna Laungani and Gauri Verma

KARUNA LAUNGANI AND GAURI VERMA

CO-FOUNDERS, THE JODI LIFE

How they met: The duo met while working at a publishing house and instantly connected on common passion areas including handicrafts and their love for design. Verma always knew she wanted more out of her career creatively and found immediate support in Laungani, who was also looking to switch gears professionally. "We bonded over the fact that we were twins, a jodi, which was a play on the word. That's how the seed was planted for our vision. After we both quit our jobs, we met up in Bikaner, discussed ideas all evening and found ourselves launching The Jodi Life six months later."

The ritual: "We draw inspiration from our travels. Going on little trips helps us grow and gain fresh perspectives," says Verma. They're also careful to ensure that their personal lives are comfortably integrated into their workplace, often bonding with each other's friends and siblings. We're constantly in touch. It's reassuring to know that we're not alone and the other is equally invested."

The secret sauce: Their biggest strength is the respect they have for each other, their value systems and their world views. "We've been fortunate to have started as co-workers and business partners, and are now family. But we never take advantage of our equation because we started as co-workers," says Verma. "Our team knows that we both have completely different takes on most things. If we've finally agreed on something, that's the indicator of a good design. There's immense security in our equation, which is why speaking our minds unapologetically has never been a problem for us." >

Mitali Sagar Patel and
Summiya Patni Shah

MITALI SAGAR PATEL AND SUMMIYYA PATNI SHAH

CO-FOUNDERS, HOUSE OF MISU

How they met: Often referring to 'fashion and each other' as their greatest loves, they've been best friends since preschool and recently completed a decade of working as co-founders of millennial fashion and lifestyle brand House of MISU. Sagar Patel says, "Summiyya and I have shared the same dream of wanting to build a fashion and design-centric company since we were children. We have fun doing it together and we know we wouldn't be on this journey with anyone else. It works because we can manage both relationships in tandem. These roles overlap at times, but at others they don't."

The ritual: They swear by a daily 45-minute check-in to chat about everything from personal goals to professional fears. "We start our day with breakfast together, discussing projects and how we'll divide and conquer them. This invariably helps us start our day on a more confident footing, knowing that there's someone else who understands your choices and decisions," says Patni Shah.

The secret sauce: The trust they have as friends helps the pair navigate even the trickiest situations. Sagar Patel says, "We're always going to have differing opinions that are bound to spill over into our personal equation. That's why it's important to spend time together outside of work. We travel with friends or go out for meals where we make a conscious effort to not discuss work. Fortunately, we have a close group of extremely supportive girlfriends."

SHIVANGINI PADHIYAR AND REKHA DATLA

CO-FOUNDERS, THE SUMMER HOUSE

How they met: As the story goes with most successful partnerships in the digital age, the co-founders of The Summer House were brought together by the forces of the internet. Datla got in touch with Padhiyar through Facebook for a completely different project. They connected, struck an instant friendship and within a year, launched their business. The Summer House was born out of the duo's mutual love for nostalgia. "We longed for the craftsmanship and quality seen in India for centuries, but our aesthetic was decidedly Western."

The secret sauce: Padhiyar says, "We're complete believers of the 'we before me' approach. It's helped build trust in our long-term partnership." They consider themselves lucky because their complementing skill sets enable them to handle alternative aspects of the business. We implicitly trust the other to get the job done." Datla and Padhiyar share a sense of sisterhood that goes far beyond work dependency. Padhiyar continues, "We have a common dream, our kids are the same age and they're great friends. We've now grown into a family business."

Balancing act: "Resist the urge to mistrust your partner. Listen with an open mind, as good intentions and manners will take you where money won't. We're also transparent in our communication and share important values that have helped nurture our relationship," concludes Datla. ■

Shivangini Padhiyar
and Rekha Datla

Community living

In Puducherry, textile and fashion designer **Naushad Ali** has found a confluence of his Tamil roots, a deep spirituality, and inspiration in every bylane. He tells **Priyanka Khanna** why the coastal town is his happy place

In his recent campaign, shot by photographer Ashish Shah, textile and fashion designer Naushad Ali focused on showcasing the real 'Pondi' (as the Indian union territory with French influences is often called) as he knows it. "Pondicherry is so much more than yellow walls, French food and beaches," he says with a laugh. "We showed Sri Aurobindo library, the Laboratoires Senteurs, the green belt of Auroville, the Marbling House, the ashram kitchen, the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) and the French Institute. Most of these are not on the tourist radar, but they are an experience."

It's the coastal town with its hybrid culture and its spiritual practices that is as much a cornerstone of Ali's ethos as are his deft experiments with textiles and fluid shapes. Last autumn, he referenced Puducherry through a nostalgic lens where, via archival photos, he translated the sartorial elegance that dotted the town in the 1950s and 1960s.

His studio is based in Auroville, a community that prides itself on its eco-conscious approach, and which continuously motivates Ali. He takes a three-pronged approach to sustainability—social, ecological and economic. With his designs, he's working towards a zero-waste practice and also addressing the perception of fashion consumption.

For his spring/summer 2022 and fall/winter 2021-22 collections, Ali went back to the idea of community, which characterises his favourite childhood memories. Through an interplay of textiles, he brought the spirit of his ancestral home to life. Retro details characterise textiles that are woven with indigenous, natural-dyed organic kala cotton, while traditional weaving techniques are reinterpreted, bringing bold multicoloured strokes of Jamdani, large-scale irregular checks and variegated stripes in a plethora of natural colours. "These pieces are handmade to be lived in, not stored away," he says

AT THE HEART OF IT

"My Tamil upbringing and current work location deeply moves and affects everything I do. Working in spiritually cognisant Pondicherry is quite literally worship. This sacred thought governs everything we make in a quiet, austere way. Pondicherry's unique mix of traditional Tamilian culture and French influence inspires the minimal-modern aesthetic of the brand. Our clients at our flagship are international, but with a deep-rooted love for India. The store is designed in a minimal, modern way. We are interested in offering clothes that do not necessarily scream for attention but make their point quite clearly, which is the essence of Pondicherry. Other than the clothes from our label, we curate and retail some of the best young talents and artisans from all over the country across jewellery, pottery, collectibles and much more."

SLOW LIVING

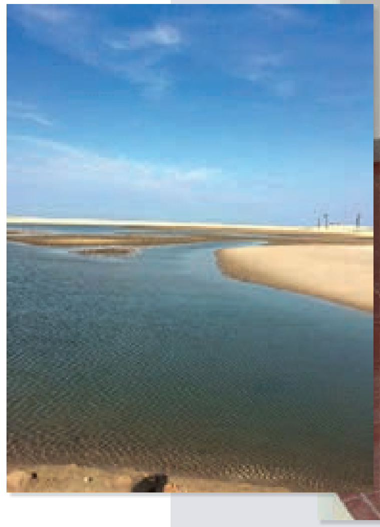
"It's been a challenging and much-needed year to pause and reflect, questioning what we want to be and how to get there. Most importantly, the past year has given me the time to peacefully work on a collection in detail. Heritage fabrics and traditional techniques like electricity-free handloom shuttles have become our brand manifestos, which reflects the slow-living lifestyle in Pondicherry. Buying consciously and keeping and wearing pieces longer are values we continue to encourage among our clients. Walking this dichotomy of wanting to preserve the past, while making for the future, has had its own challenges. But that is what has made the journey so meaningful."

CRAFT-FORWARD

"I have an obsession towards traditional textiles. There is so much to explore. I just went looking for the Mashru weavers and Jat-Garasia embroiderers in the remote villages of Kutch. Visiting them to learn and understand the craft has opened up so much for me. I do this every year as a part of my research for my new collections. We are privileged in India to still have these living crafts. They are a big part of my label."

UNDERSTATED EASE

"It's simple—we put comfort first without compromising on the fit. The fabric, its feel, is the hero, rather than only the silhouettes. We even prewash all our fabrics so they are soft and feel familiar to our clients, rather than a freshly made piece. We try to be playful and at the same time minimal, which is a fresh take on handwoven fabrics." ■



Clockwise, from top left: Naushad Ali; his studio in Puducherry; pieces from his latest collection that use heritage crafts in a contemporary language; Puducherry, the spirituality of which has been a definitive influence on Ali's work

An optimistic outlook

For **Amrish Kumar**, a return to normalcy will mean looking at the brighter side—literally. By **Shalini Shah**

There's one word that, in Amrish Kumar's words, sums up Ritu Kumar's new winter/festive 2021 line: "Muchness." In print and colour. "This season everything that we're doing has a lot of detail in it. There's a lot of print, there's a lot of brightness, or perhaps the move away from more spartan, clean lines to something that's more rich. Layer upon layer of print and more, for someone who wants to get back to that colour, the happiness... That's what manifests in the collection," says the brand's managing director and chief executive officer.

So there are printed, flowing co-ord sets cinched at the waist, angarkha-style; printed knee-length dresses with embroidered bodices; an embroidered kaftan tunic with a mandarin collar; a knee-length black dress undoubtedly in festive territory thanks to multicolour print; a plum full-sleeved dress with a smocked neckline... If we're signalling a return to normalcy after a pandemic year, our wardrobes will be harnessed.

"For this collection we've gone back to the archives to develop the prints. It's a sort of back-to-the-roots," adds Kumar.

Helming a heritage brand founded in the 1960s by his mother Ritu Kumar, Amrish has been privy to several changes over the years. "Change is a fundamental requirement. I think a lot of changes are also those bequeathed to us from what is happening in the world around us. India certainly has changed a lot. It has become much more contemporary, much more global," he ponders. He, however, also witnesses a dichotomy in what women seek in their wardrobes, a leaning towards aesthetic purity rather than ambiguity. "Traditional clothes are going back to their roots—the customer wants things that are traditional and authentic—but at the same time when they're looking at their own personality they also want things that are much more modern and contemporary, something closer to their lives today, which makes a lot of sense to me."

Having an ear to the ground has proved indispensable. "A brand has to be reflective of the people who wear it. And as those people evolve and change culturally and adapt, so does the brand. The Ritu Kumar brand has been around for so many decades, we're good at doing that. We're still relevant."

Brands around the world have had to adapt—to good effect—to the concept of 'phygital' shows, edgy camerawork and extreme close-ups replacing the FROW and streetwear action outside buzzing show venues. Amrish envisages a return to the good old times, as far as fashion showcases are concerned. "My opinion is, as soon as it can go back to normal it will go back to normal. The physicality of a presentation cannot be replicated."

As the world slowly transitions to the offline mode, and going out stops being a source of consternation and face mask patting, Amrish too is looking at being able to travel ("a big casualty") again. After a year and a half spent mostly in Delhi, the world is calling. Ask him where first and he replies: "Everywhere." ■

"For this collection we've gone back to the archives. It's a sort of back-to-the-roots"
-AMRISH KUMAR

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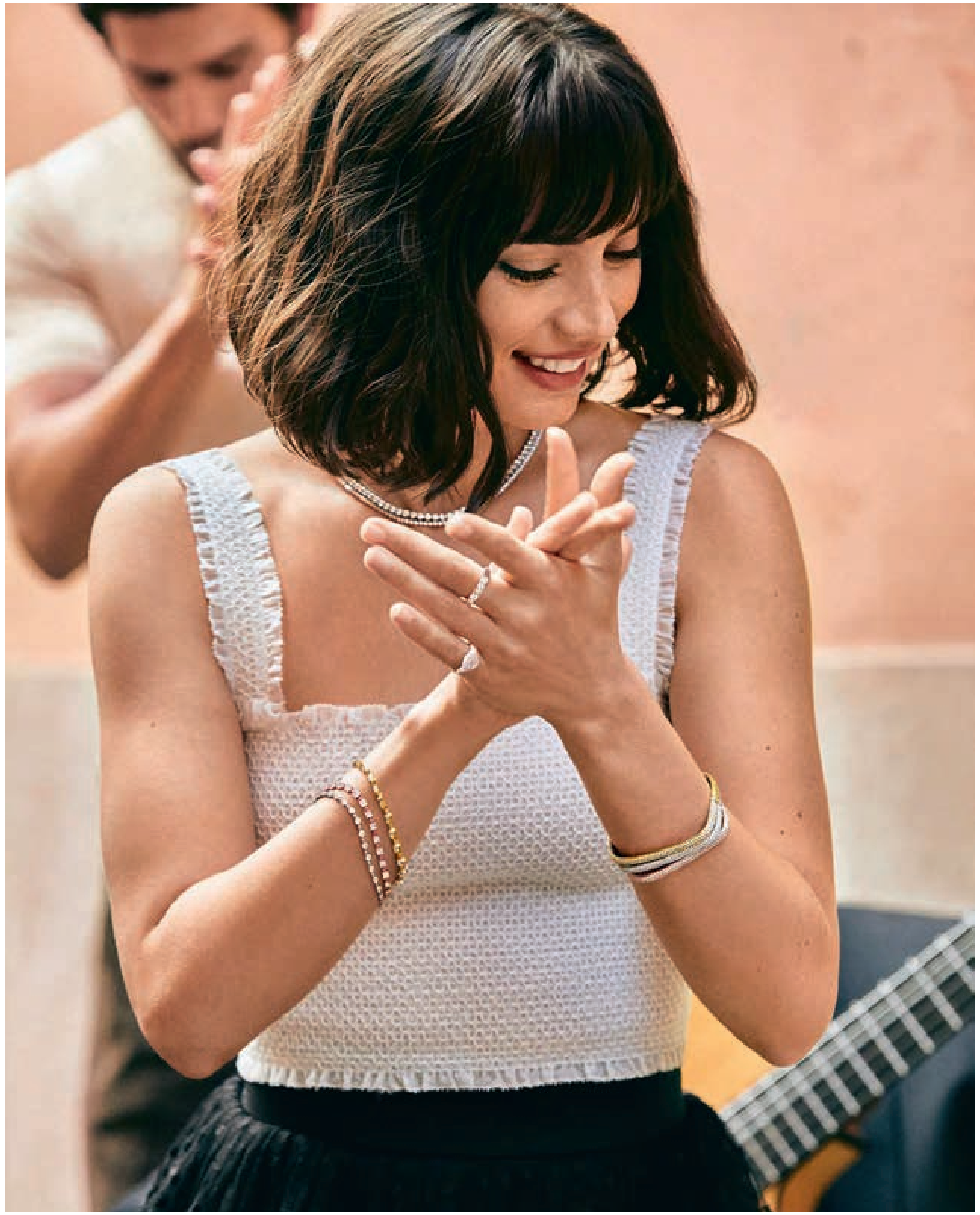


A new life

As we re-emerge and reunite with loved ones once again, celebration is in order. The Natural Diamond Council partners with actor **Ana De Armas** for a second time for Love Life, a campaign to signify a new lease on life, sealed with a diamond. By **Akanksha Kamath**

What did you miss the most about a free life? Intimate scenarios where friends meet for the first time, partners link arms as they take a twilight walk and families reunite after isolation are some of the scenes that form Natural Diamond Council's new campaign titled Love Life. Evincing an optimistic mood and starring *No Time To Die* actor and current Hollywood darling Ana De Armas, the images are captured with celebration in mind. To fit the scene is a diamond that signifies new memories.

When I connect with the Cuban actor over Zoom, she's excited to re-enter the world. Much like the rest of us, De Armas knows a thing or two about encountering delays in lockdown. Her new Bond film, where she stars alongside Daniel Craig, finally released last month after several date changes, and her new release, where she plays Marilyn Monroe in a Netflix biopic, saw a postponement to 2022. Now, as red carpets finally roll out, flights take off and families get together, for De Armas, it's a time for joy. "Our focus has turned to diving back into life," the actor tells me. "We are finding new ways of solidifying relationships, and diamonds are the ultimate item to symbolise meaningful happenings, becoming part of our new memories." *The Gray Man* actor talks about the new campaign and the diamonds she finds life affirming.

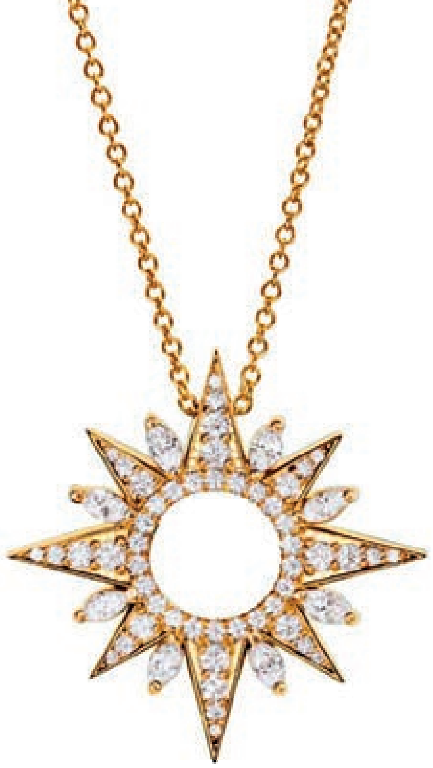
Akanksha Kamath: As with the first campaign, there is so much tranquillity and joy in Love Life. Tell us more about shooting in Majorca, Spain, and how you relate with the theme?
Ana De Armas: In Majorca, there are beautiful, stunning locations. There's the ocean, trees, nature, and also street scenes with parties, the strumming of guitars and a lot of food. All those things that will make you really want to start travelling again and seeing the world, enjoying life and getting together with the people you love. This campaign is a celebration for loving life.

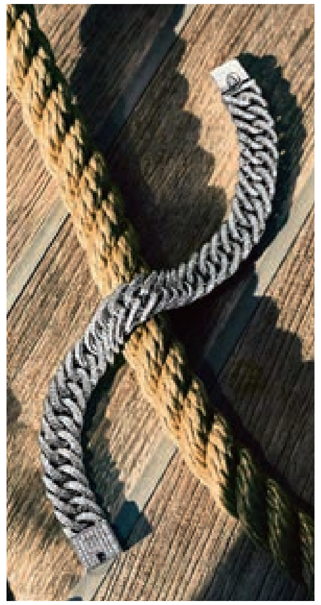
AK: Do you think the ease of the campaign symbolises a new era for how diamonds will be worn going ahead?
ADA: I think people usually associate diamonds with big events, whether it's red-carpet events or big life events, but I think that nowadays diamonds are unique in the sense that they can be worn to dress up or to dress down. There are so many pieces and collections that are being created right now that are genderless, or pieces that you can play with, wear only a few, or combine all of them. Diamonds have a new meaning. They are the ultimate for meaningful things that happen in your life. When I look at my diamonds, they bring back memories. I remember the occasion, I remember who or how or where I got it. They carry so many memories, and now they are representing new memories and the future.

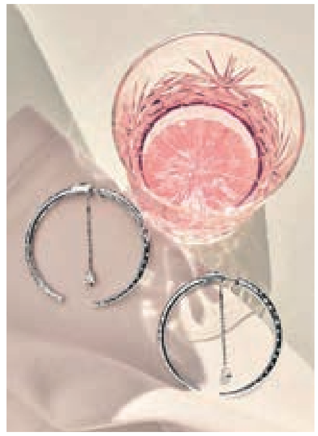
AK: How do you like to wear your diamonds?
ADA: There are so many ways to wear diamonds. I love playing around with the different pieces I have. I love all the diamonds I have and I don't usually take them off even in my everyday life. Sometimes less is more and sometimes more is more. So it depends on the occasion. But if I need to dress them up, I add more. Diamonds make you feel strong, sexy, beautiful and independent. They give you confidence and I like to have them on all the time. I even wear them to sleep.

AK: What are some of the pieces that you have on all the time?
ADA: A diamond tennis choker that I always wear because it's very versatile. I put layers of little chains with it or if I'm going on a date I just add more diamonds to it. I also wear several delicate rings with sparkling little diamonds that are a part of me now. I love one of the pieces from the campaign—the Cuban link bracelet designed by Malyia McNaughton. I would wear it out to dinner with a white shirt, jeans and sneakers.

AK: What are you excited about coming back into the world?
ADA: Well, I just finished shooting *The Gray Man*. We were shooting for six months so it's nice to finally get some time off. The James Bond film just premiered and that felt like the longest wait. It's finally in theatres and that's so exciting. ■







From left: 'Soleil Pendant' necklace, 'Embrace Link' bracelet, 'Crescent Drop' hoop earrings; all Malyia McNaughton

Dripping in diamonds

This past August saw *Vogue* India's first-ever two-day online Diamond Festival, in association with The Natural Diamond Council. **Priyanka Parkash** eavesdropped on the many conversations that revolved around carats, contemporary design and couture

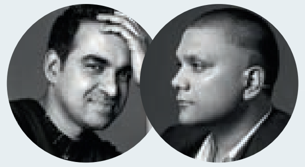
One of the many effects of the pandemic has been a focus on virtual knowledge-sharing. I'm not talking remote schooling, but rather, the conversations and interactions online that have provided a deep dive into various topics.

At *Vogue* India and the Natural Diamond Council's first-ever Diamond Festival, experts from all over the globe provided different perspectives on diamond jewellery, diamond trends, the move towards everyday diamonds, and so much more.

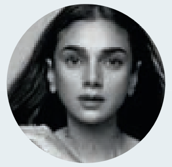
Missed it? Don't worry. Here are our top highlights from the festival, which you can still find on both *Vogue* India's and the Natural Diamond Council's social media handles.

THE ROYALS WERE THE ORIGINAL JEWELLERY INFLUENCERS
Curator and author Amin Jaffer, along with Francesca Cartier Brickell and HH Radhikaraje Gaekwad gave us an incredible peek into the diamond war chests of former maharajas. The panel shared anecdotes and eye-opening stories from centuries ago—Cartier Brickell shared details from letters Indian maharajas wrote to her grandfather Jean-Jacques Cartier, HH Radhikaraje reminisced about family treasures and where they are today, and Jaffer gave us his expert insight into the way the royals dressed

HOW IT STARTED, HOW IT'S GOING
Like many amazing ideas, the event was born out of a casual coffee between *Vogue* India's editor-in-chief Priya Tanna and Richa Singh, managing director, Natural Diamond Council. Tanna and Singh opened day one, taking us back to the genesis of the event and the months of work that followed. From their first diamond pieces to a woman's relationship with diamonds, the women touched upon all the cornerstones



DESIGNS ON DIAMONDS
What made Bibhu Mohapatra and Gaurav Gupta foray into diamonds? Tanna opened day two with a conversation centring on carats and couture. And as designers, Mohapatra and Gupta seamlessly took their fashion vision into the world of jewellery and diamonds, believing that when it comes to completing any look, fine jewellery was the missing link



ADITI RAO HYDARI HAS BEEN PANDEMIC-BUYING JEWELLERY
Actor Aditi Rao Hydari's classic beauty and style has long been admired. Her love for jewellery came from her grandmother, and Rao Hydari reminisced about playing dress-up in her grandmother's jewellery box growing up. Rao Hydari also deep-dived into her journey when it came to a particular piece of jewellery, and shared what the it-factor is for her while shopping

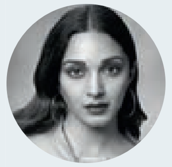
CREATING MODERN HEIRLOOMS
Jewellery forms a fundamental part of familial stories, so what makes something a modern heirloom? A piece that lasts generations, said Lucia Silvestri, Bulgari's creative director. And TataCliq's editor-in-chief Nonita Kalra added her own evocative take while Silvestri showcased some stunners from Bulgari's collections, including a whopping 20-carat diamond

WITH LOVE FROM PARIS
For Paris-based jeweller Valérie Messika, Indian women and their love of jewellery have been pivotal in her aesthetic. She discussed how the women in her life, especially her two daughters, are her biggest inspirations

THREE GIRLS AND A RING
Stephanie Gottlieb's love for stacking has many takers. As I listened in, she talked about modern engagement rings with stylist Archana Walavalkar—because finding the perfect engagement ring is almost as difficult as finding the perfect partner

HOW GEN Z IS WEARING ITS DIAMONDS
Actors Malavika Mohanan and Alaya F, along with designer Nimish Shah of Shift and Bhaane, explained their generation's relationship with diamonds. From upending trends to making each piece their own, this generation has embraced diamonds in a whole new way. From stories of Alaya and Mohanan and their relationship with their mothers' jewellery, to the influences in a young Shah's life, the trio spoke about all things diamonds—from their icons, to their styling, to their memories of jewellery

DECODING THE T-SHIRT DIAMONDS
Fashion stylist Anaita Shroff Adajania, *Vogue* India's contributing style editor, joined in for a live session on styling diamonds with a simple tee. In her inimitable way, she took us behind the scenes of the most iconic diamond moments, her styling career, a few epic *Vogue* India covers, and the coolest diamond trends on her radar



STAR STYLE: DIAMONDS ON-SCREEN AND ON THE RED CARPET
Actor Kiara Advani and Shroff Adajania provided a peek into red-carpet styling and diamonds in cinema, as well as a look into their personal diamond wardrobes. Advani looked into her jewellery box for the heirloom earrings she inherited from her mother, and spoke of how, for her, sentiment trumps everything

JEWELLERY HAS LONG BEEN WORN ACROSS GENDERS
While historically it was the maharajas who wore the jewels, over the last few decades, men wearing jewellery has been on the wane. But all that's changing, thanks to the re-emergence of gender-fluid designs. US *Vogue*'s international editor-at-large Hamish Bowles, designer Hanut Singh, marketing expert Kaustav Dey, and model Nidhi Sunil provided divergent viewpoints on gender-free design. From personal stories by Bowles and Singh, to Sunil's prowess at borrowing pieces from her boyfriend, to Dey's use of jewellery as a form of expression, this session provides an insight into more inclusive conversations

DIAMONDS ARE FOR EVERY DAY
Celebrity influencer Mira Rajput Kapoor, jeweller Natasha Khurana and jewellery consultant Arundhati De touched upon the pieces they gravitate towards. The three women discussed how the approach to jewellery—moving it from a special occasion to enjoying it at all times—is reflective of a larger social shift. This new generation of wearers and creators is making jewellery less precious and more personal. Rajput Kapoor and De even dove into conversation about engagement rings, and how they are truly an everyday essential for a woman when it comes to her diamond jewellery

MAKING A STATEMENT WITH DIAMOND JEWELLERY
Influencer Masoom Minawala's relationship with diamonds is personal. Hailing from a family of jewellers, she discussed which items make it to her treasure chest, while breaking down some of her favourite statement diamond moments through her career and explaining why a piece of jewellery always has a memory attached to it

THE DIAMOND STORYTELLER
Closing the festival was a conversation with designer and jeweller Sabyasachi Mukherjee. Jewellery, he told *Vogue* India's fashion features director Priyanka Khanna, was a natural extension. But leave it to Sabya to bring in a flair for the rare with his mix of diamonds with contrasting textures. It is his unusual take on this classic stone that makes his designs stand out

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BEAUTY

The practice of joy

Perizaad Zorabian's personal brand of eternal happiness is nearly envious. It's a state of mind, but it is also a genuine work in progress, something she toils at every day simply by focusing on the good—and exercising. By **Aditi Bhimjyani**

When we connect over a pretty patchy Zoom call on a monsoon morning, Perizaad Zorabian is lounging by a lovely pool, taking in the dewy green lawn post a quick morning drizzle and a leisurely breakfast with her parents. She is at their family farmhouse a couple of hours outside of Mumbai. This farm is her favourite thing. And she is decidedly happy.

Zorabian, 47, a former actor and a little bit of an eternal sunshine girl, is president of sales and marketing at Zorabian Chicken. It's a leading poultry brand in India, founded by her father in 1983 and now run by the family. While she focuses on her mean marketing skills by handling the front end (something she pulls off with total style, given her acting chops) out of an office in Mumbai, her two brothers handle the farm where they also run a state-of-the-art food processing unit.

FINDING YOUR HAPPY SPACE

A place that brings her great joy, the farmhouse, which her father built 11 years ago, is where her family often comes together. She has driven here with her husband, Boman Irani, and their two kids for just one night. But 24 hours is enough of a reset. "I am overwhelmed and stressed right now and it's so funny I am talking about being happy while I am in my happy place," she grins. "But it's bringing me perspective. I have a lot to be grateful for."

Her smile is her trademark mega-watt. She is luminescent, her skin aglow. It has to be the happy hormones because she is still in her pyjamas, with a yet-to-be-washed face. And her energy is as infectious as her smile. She often gets teased about being this sort of poster child for happiness, the one who compulsively likes everyone and everything. But as she explains, being happy is a definite choice she makes every day—whether it is in her pyjamas on her farm or tying a rakhi for her driver Bala, who has worked with her for 15 years, or even when just exercising. Even morning chai with her husband, a fellow workaholic, makes her happy as it gives her time to connect with him and keeps her sane.

> "I KNOW THAT IF I CHOOSE TO BE NEGATIVE, IT DOESN'T HELP ME OPTIMISE WHO I AM. IT'S JUST GOING TO EAT MY SOUL"

GRATITUDE, EVERY DAY

Gratitude is foremost on Zorabian's mind. Even while using every opportunity to count her blessings, she admits to dealing with a long and rough year with the pandemic—professionally, of course, but also personally. "Lockdown and all its associated stress came together with menopausal symptoms and I ended up putting on 13kg. I felt miserable," she says. Attending an event where she went on stage to collect an award for her company dressed in a frumpy, loose white shirt was the last straw and her truest low. She hit the gym with a vengeance earlier this year.

Now exercise is sacred. Every day begins with some form of activity. Simple runs with her old friend Neil (who holds her accountable and therefore is her biggest blessing) and weight training at the gym have again begun to bring her the joy she had missed over the past couple of years. Her fitness routine is now an inherent part of her happy regimen. "I am not even going to pretend that manicures, spa days and a blow-dry make me happy. I wash my face and slap on some cream. My last facial was three years ago, before my kids' Navjote ceremony," she says.

FOCUS ON THE GOOD

Just about five months into this reawakening, Zorabian is already looking and feeling fitter. For her, mental strength comes with physical strength. Nothing like a jog or a walk to recalibrate her brain when it's feeling burdened or low. "My husband always says heaven and hell lie between your ears. How I choose to look at things could make everything change. I focus on the good and I definitely don't sweat the small stuff," she says. "I know that if I choose to be negative, it doesn't help me optimise who I am. It's just going to eat at my soul."

Apart from keeping her chin firmly up ("Fake it till you make it" is just the sort of millennial line she loves), Zorabian has a great little trick for being happy. She resolutely likes to surround herself with people who have the right attitude—employees, colleagues or domestic staff. "It keeps up the vibe of my company and my home. I value it more than skill. And I take the time out to appreciate it too. I heard a Narayana Murthy speech once where he said you should strive to make another person feel a few inches taller in your presence. It really stayed with me."

But besides Zorabian's contagious spirits, life isn't always a party for her. "I am not a crazy warrior princess," she smiles. "Of course I go through lows." This is her other side, a cautious one that backs into a corner when it is too exhausted to feel happy. It's only human, after all. "I am volatile. My EQ is a little too high. I love fiercely. I get disappointed fiercely—I go all out."

Believing, manifesting

"People don't really know that I believe deeply in mannats. Once I take a mannat, no one can make me break it. Since I have zero control over my food, I use my mannats to exercise self-discipline and control"

Plating happiness

Whether ancient Ayurveda or modern research, food science continues to link eating habits with how we look, move and feel. With expert assistance, **Sonal Ved** helps you navigate your way to joy

KARINA TWISS /TRUNK ARCHIVE

When it comes to food and happiness, I know two things: cake makes everyone happy and karela doesn't. But only if it were that simple. There is a correlation between the food we eat and how it impacts our state of mind. According to an article submitted by The National Centre of Biotechnology Information, researchers have concluded that "healthy food choices such as eating fruits and vegetables have not only physical but also mental health benefits and might be a long-term investment in future well-being."

You'll notice how some foods make us feel sluggish, bored and irritated while some uplift, get us moving and feel more joyous. This is said in many ways in Ayurveda, so that's where we went looking first for more information. In a conversation with Sahara Rose, the author of *Eat Feel Fresh: A Contemporary, Plant-Based Ayurvedic Cookbook*, we deep dive into eating for our body type.

BODY AND BALANCE
Sahara Rose's cookbook discovers the connection between food and your inner self

VATA

This dosha is about air (ether) energy. The body type here tends to be lightweight. They have dry skin, hair and tongue, a thin body frame, muscles or bones, sometimes they may have rough bumps on the skin, experience callused feet or cracked nails easily and have cold hands or feet. When this dosha is unbalanced, it can lead to a whirlwind of air energy, thereby causing anxiety in the body.

MOOD FOOD

This body type needs grounding and dense foods that will bring down the airiness.

Sweet potato: Nothing grounds you like root vegetables. Sweet potato has qualities that will counteract a Vata's airiness. It keeps them balanced as their mind continues to indulge with the dreamy wind energy.

Peach: The juicy sweetness of this fruit hydrates the body. Air energy needs ample hydration to feel centred, which in turn dispels that unnecessary anxiety.

Oatmeal: Nothing feels more grounding and like a hug in a bowl than a big scoop of oatmeal. The airy energy of a Vata personality accepts oatmeal-led meals easily; they can digest this ingredient. Oats help them feel comfortable, supported and secured.

Avoid: White sugar or cane syrup, ice cream, frozen yoghurt, salted nuts, barley, beans, raw vegetables (especially broccoli and kale), apples and green bananas.

PITTA

Pitta is fire energy. This body type has a higher body temperature, a sharp mind, defined teeth or jawline, fairer and oily skin and light-coloured eyes. They are able to channel energy well into their work and passions. When their energy is imbalanced, they are prone to rashes and inflammation, produce excessive saliva and experience underarm, mouth and feet odour. They can get easily overwhelmed and harbour unchecked anger.

MOOD FOOD

Foods that are cooling will relax their fiery nature. They can also assimilate foods that are otherwise difficult to digest, as this puts Pitta's fire energy to good use.

Apple: Cool, slightly juicy and sweet, apples balance Pitta's hot digestive energy and help them stay calm. The slight sweetness of this fruit fuels their fiery body type so they don't get burned out or drained from a lack of sugar.

Cucumber: This vegetable is perfect for a Pitta because it is cooling and wet. Eating these or even placing them on the eyes for relaxation contributes to reducing pent-up hot energy and frustration.

Broccoli: Cruciferous foods are great for stimulating their digestion track. If a Pitta does not have tougher foods to digest, then their system and mood can get overheated, which can then cause inflammation and prompt them to lash out.

Quinoa: This grain is cool, dry and grounding, which reduces the excess oil generation in a Pitta's body. Whole grains also clear the skin and the system—and the Pitta personality loves taking pride in their appearance.

Avoid: Brown sugar, honey, molasses and white sugar, nuts (except soaked almonds), sour dairy like buttermilk, sour cream or yoghurt, buckwheat, corn, yeast bread, onion, garlic, eggplant, tomato, and sour fruits like grapefruit and lemon.

KAPHA

Kapha energy is a combination of water and earth elements. Characteristics of a

Kapha body type include a heavy body structure, bigger bones with a tendency to become overweight, cold body temperature, tendency toward oily but smooth skin, clammy hands and soft features with big eyes. This personality type forms some of the most loving and understanding people when properly balanced. They are stable and provide certainty to those who may feel constantly overwhelmed. However, if this dosha's energy becomes heavy, due to their diets and desire to be a stable energy to others, they are likely to become depressed.

MOOD FOOD

Foods that are light, dry and astringent are perfect for keeping the energy in a Kapha personality balanced.

Pear: This fruit is light, slightly sweet and drying in nature. This helps take care of the heavy energy in Kaphas. Light foods help keep their energies up.

Cabbage: Another lightweight ingredient, cabbage has benefits similar to pears. Moreover it is easy to digest and such foods counteract the heaviness that comes from the slower digestion that this body type is prone to.

Barley: The dry grain will scrape off any extra oil or fat from a Kapha's system, resulting in more balanced energy.

Avoid: Dairy, grain-based pasta, wheat, white or brown rice, olives, potato, squash, nuts or nut butter, sweeteners like artificial maple syrup, white sugar, banana, mango and avocado. ■

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

Life coach Sumitra Daswani, the founder of Born From The Earth, shares how she found happiness in a bowl of Ayurveda

"I studied Ayurveda in my early thirties at the Institute of Integrative Nutrition in New York. I was an island girl (who grew up between the Virgin Islands and Jamaica) and spent her twenties running around NYC chasing corporate dreams. At first I didn't know what was with all that earth, air, water, dosha, gunas. However, I was curious to know more. Ayurveda was one way in which I connected with my Indian roots, so in 2017, I decided to move to Kerala for a month to deep dive into the world of Ayurveda by taking up courses at the Kerala Ayurveda Academy.

"All my life, I had been a Pitta-dominant personality and it fuelled my career. It kept me productive, energised, organised and enthusiastic, with a capacity to work hard. But when it got aggravated it left me feeling irritable, competitive, controlling and hot-tempered. I was skipping breakfast due to my hectic pace of life, eating on the run and gorging on late-night meals. As a result, I was bloated and feeling heavy all the time.

"Studying Ayurveda opened a new world, a new mindset, and sculpted a whole new body for me. I learnt that I needed to eat more sweet foods in the form of fruit, more bitter foods in the form of greens to cool myself down and eat less hot and spicy food, because really, who needed more fire? I practised this one habit and ingredient at a time, ate seasonally and slowly and saw a positive difference right away. I was calmer, more focused and positive—all of which led to me feeling happier. It's not a magic pill, it's a lifestyle change and that is what I want people to commit to."

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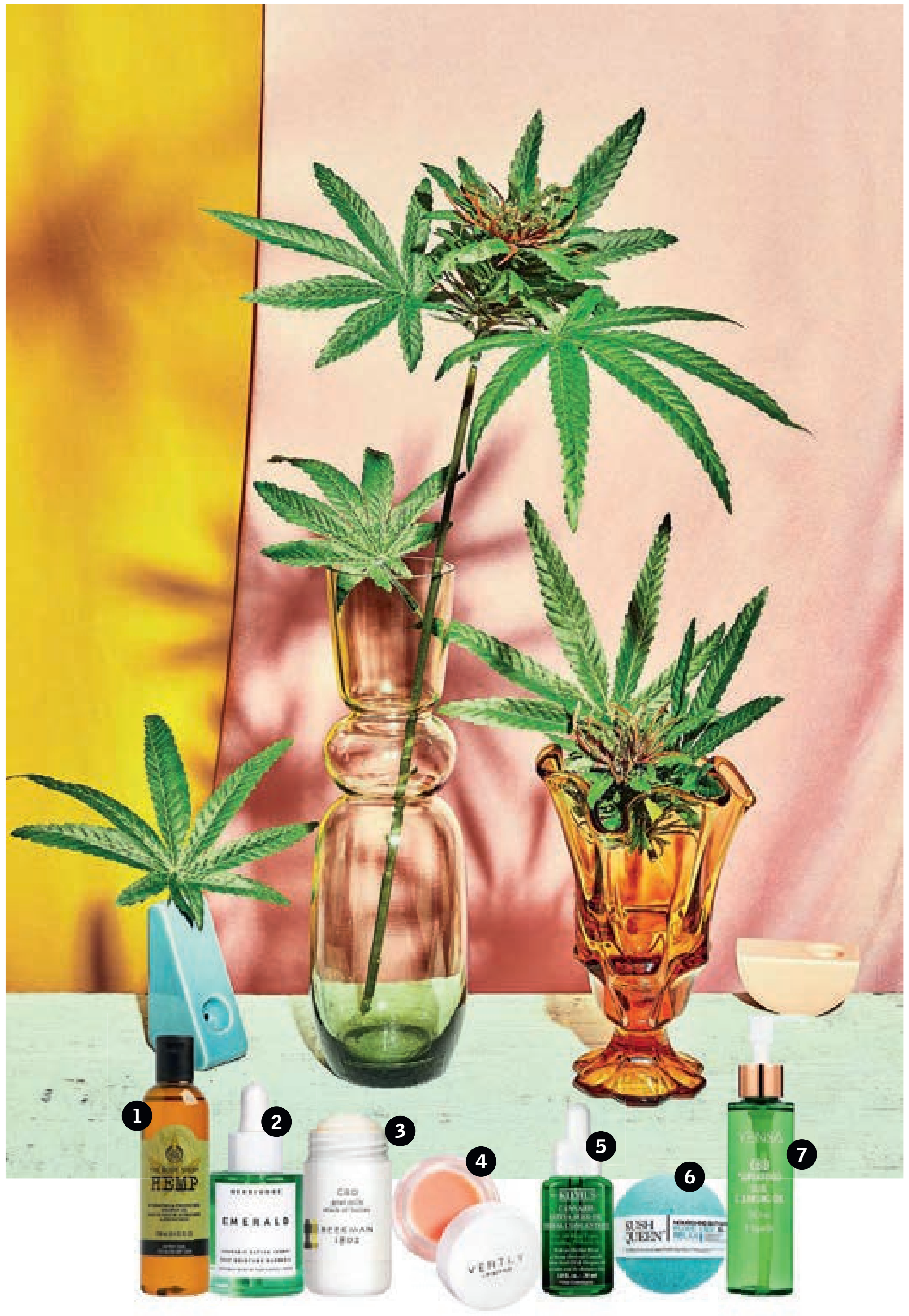

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Out of touch

You're far from being alone in feeling alone. **Nupur Sarvaiya** finds out the ways to seek solace and support for skin hunger in the time of social distancing

Bellies drop, drinks slop, and in some cases, extreme turbulence means bumps or bruises. If you have ever been on a plane hitting a rough patch of air, you'll know the pay-off of holding hands (even if with a stranger). I'll always be thankful to the woman seated next to me in 14B, headed to Queenstown, New Zealand, who silently held my hand when things got chaotic on the flight. There is science behind this innate stimulus for connection. We ache for touch and wilt without it.

So when the great global confinement began—one where lockdowns and shutdowns became the new way of life, social distancing and shelter-in-place orders and touch limited us to our touchscreens—it made way for the neurological phenomenon of skin hunger. When we notice a gap between the amount of positive, consensual touch we long for, whether a platonic hug, a cuddle, a kiss or even a slight graze, and the amount we receive, we experience skin hunger or touch deprivation.

HUMAN CONNECTION

Touch is the preliminary, most profound language we learn when young. The lack of it means we depreciate physically, mentally and emotionally. "We may not recognise it, but positive physical touch is extraordinarily imperative to us. When babies are born, doctors place them on the mother's chest to regulate their core temperature. From our time as infants to adulthood, touch is a primal, powerful requirement that's indispensable at every stage and age," says Mumbai-based counselling psychologist Tanya Percy Vasunia.

Tactile stimulation triggers a cascade of bioelectric and chemical changes that relax the nervous system. It signals safety, soothes stress, reduces heart rate, lowers blood pressure, makes us more compassionate, and activates oxytocin, the calming, bonding hormone and neurotransmitter. "That's why a massage, acupuncture or reflexology is so helpful. Not because it releases tension, but pressure touch helps break down cortisol in our bodies and makes us feel good," explains Percy Vasunia. The benefits of empathetic physical contact are long-lasting. According to research at the University of North Carolina, hugging activates the thymus gland to boost the production of white blood cells in our bodies which fight infection. Happy sensations can also alleviate flu symptoms.

HOME AND ALONE

The phrase 'skin hunger' connotes a need, not a want. What we are evolutionarily engineered to need is what has impaired us most amidst a pandemic. This is a particularly gruelling irony—touch deprivation weakens our immune system, making us more susceptible to COVID-19. For many who live alone, are single, introverted, outgoing or even quarantined, skin hunger was exacerbated during the coronavirus outbreak—and its emotional toll can be extreme.

"Among all our senses, touch is the only one that we cannot survive without. If we didn't have our sense of touch, we would constantly be vulnerable, like our safety net is lifted off," says Dr Kory Floyd, a professor of communication and psychology at the University of Arizona and the author of *The Loneliness Cure*. But everyone's skin-to-skin contact needs differ. People who are touch-averse may prefer infrequent contact, whereas some may thrive with frequent stimulation. "It might vary from person to person and even from culture to culture, but nobody needs none. It's a lot like sleep. Everybody needs sleep but not everyone needs the same amount to feel rested," he elaborates.

While the loss of physical intimacy may seem like a minor concern in our current circumstances, in the carnage we "end up feeling more and more stressed," Dr Floyd adds, "and stress is accumulative. To soothe it, we land up dabbling in maladaptive things like overeating, drinking too much, using recreational drugs or engaging in anonymous sexual encounters. These make us feel better in the moment but introduce new, often bigger problems."

Can one epidemic lead to another? Depression, mood and anxiety disorders, and an inability to interpret and express emotions are other manifestations of touch deprivation. There is a more sinister layer too. "Loneliness," says Dr Floyd. "The longer, very real repercussion of skin hunger is a feeling that makes us feel alone in the world. Throughout history, being alone was a precarious thing, whereas being around your family, your tribe, your community meant being protected. That sense of vulnerability is still with us. And it can exacerbate pain, inflammation," he says. ■

TENZIN LHAGYAL; PRABUDDHA DASGUPTA

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

For now, when isolation seems inevitable, here's what we can do to stay in touch apart, alone, together

HUG IT OUT

"Hugging a pillow, a heavy blanket or something soft can give us a sense of security, the way it did as a child when we hugged our favourite stuffed toys. But any alternative is only an imperfect substitute—nothing can be a replacement for hugging loved ones," says Dr Floyd.

SWEAT IT OUT

"Conscious exercising like yoga, Tai Chi or practising mindfulness can mimic the pressure receptors in our feet and also diminish touch deprivation," says Percy Vasunia.

PUPPY LOVE

Animal-assisted therapy is an effective skin hunger mitigation strategy, reveals Percy Vasunia. "Adopting a pet and petting them can mirror the attention and affection similar to another human."

SELF-LOVE

"Some types of solo intimacy, whether it is masturbation, self-massage or giving yourself a hug, can also satiate skin hunger," says Percy Vasunia.

The pursuit of happiness

Chasing what you think will make you happy is likely to leave you more unfulfilled. Two happiness researchers examine the good life and tell us how to build one. By **Sanjana Salunkhe**

JUSTIN POLKEY; OLIVIA MALONE. STYLED: AMY MACH. HAIR: TSUKI. MAKEUP: ALLIE SMITH. MANICURE: HONEY. MODEL: SYMONE LU. PRODUCTION: NOTED

If money could buy me anything, I would most definitely spend it all on just being happy. I have had a long, on-going relationship with finding happiness. Having spent more than two years in lockdown and gone through many life changes at a rapid rate—from work from home, pregnancy and childbirth, to now being a new working mum—I was constantly looking for answers. What can I do to be happier? Is there a way I can be happier? Can I train my mind to have only positive thoughts? Eric Weiner, journalist, speaker and author of *The Geography Of Bliss*, had an answer for me. Or maybe not.

As Weiner travelled from Iceland (one of the world's happiest countries because of its sense of community well-being) to Bhutan (where the country's king has made Gross National Happiness a national priority) to Moldova (not a happy place, and research shows the most percentage of unhappy people), he realised he was navigating the path to contentment, not necessarily happiness. "I can tell you what happiness is not. It is not pleasure, at least not the only thing. It is not a smiley face, either. I define happiness the way the ancient Greeks did, as a sublime state of both contentment and virtue. Happiness, to me, means not only feeling good but being good, and crucially, doing good."

THE HAPPINESS PARADOX

"I define happiness the way the ancient Greeks did, as a sublime state of both contentment and virtue"

—ERIC WEINER

If you think winning the lottery will make you happy, studies show otherwise. "The science of happiness, or positive psychology, measures people's happiness and then investigates what happy people tend to have in common. During my research, one finding that really struck me was the importance of relationships in determining our happiness. It is the single most important ingredient. The healthier our relationships—with family, friends and others—the happier we are," explains Weiner. So, happiness is communal.

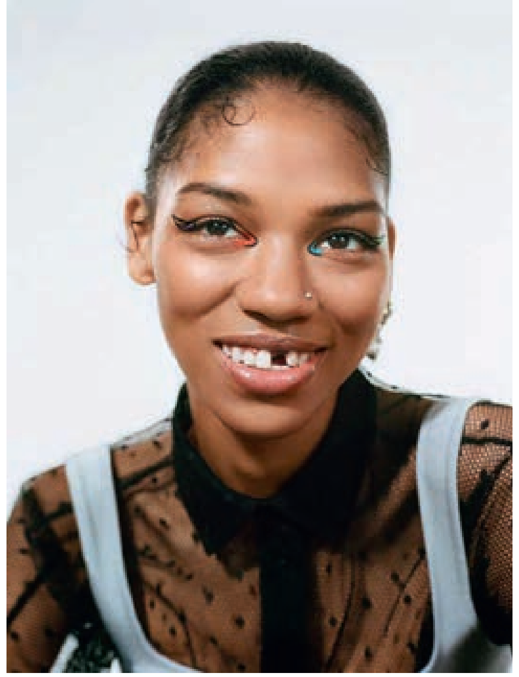
Stanford behavioural scientist Jennifer Aaker, the co-author of the book *Humor, Seriously: Why Humor Is A Secret Weapon In Business And Life*, believes that happiness is purely defined by purpose and what is meaningful to you in life. "In a set of studies conducted with my colleagues, we tried to show that humans go from associating happiness with excitement and pleasure in our teen years to calm, contentment and fulfilment later in life. So while landing the big promotion might have been all we needed to feel fulfilled at age 25, by the time we reach 35 or 45, our health, families, and having an impact in the lives of others matters more. This means that when we pursue happiness—and by the time we think we have attained it—its meaning shifts and we start the pursuit again," she explains. So instead of chasing happiness, we need to anchor on purpose in our lives.

HAPPY PLACES

The American writer and author Henry Miller once said, "One's destination is never a place but a new way of looking at things." Weiner agrees. "Travel is connected with happiness in a number of ways. It simplifies our life and declutters it. I am at my happiest in a sparsely furnished hotel room, with all my possessions fitting into one carry-on bag," he says. For Weiner, a place is what shapes and defines us. "Change your place, I believe, and you can change your life." According to Aaker, travel opens you up to the feeling of awe, which is what resets you. "Awe is a feeling of reverence that overwhelms you. It is encompassing. It takes over all your thoughts and makes sure you are fully present with no room for anything. It shifts your awareness from the day-to-day and alters it to how you understand the world."

HAPPY THOUGHTS

You can't train your mind, but Weiner suggests taking small steps, like cultivating happy habits that bring joy to you. "It can be anything—like regular exercise or making your bed every morning, just a constellation of life practices," he says. According to Aaker, one way is to adopt a journey mindset. "When we adopt a journey mindset versus a destination mindset, we are able to make a meaningful connection with our past self while also seeing the potential for future growth." Another way she suggests is simply to not take yourself so seriously and be fuelled by humour and levity. "The reality is we can't afford to be humourless. We're in the midst of a mental health crisis. Rates of depression are on the increase. And sense of humour has been linked to physical resilience, not just mental well-being," she says. ■



DAILY DOSE

Behavioural scientist Jennifer Aaker lists the ways to add joy to your day-to-day routine

Be kinder to others and lower your expectations. You'll get more happy surprises when you decrease the gap between expectations and reality.

Integrate humour. It can spark creativity, defuse tension and strengthen relationships.

Rather than prioritising 'being happy', prioritise living a life rich in stories. "A good story is: you win, then you lose, then you learn, and it's a journey," she says.

Rush hour

It turns out that putting your body through stress and efficiency de-stresses the mind. So if you're feeling frazzled, upset or overwhelmed, getting in a sweat session is your best bet. By **Avanti Dalal**

ERRIKOS ANDREOU

Elle Woods said it best in the noughties classic *Legally Blonde*: "Exercise gives you endorphins. Endorphins make you happy. Happy people just don't shoot their husbands. They just don't," when she explained why she was certain her client was innocent of her husband's murder. It might not have been the argument that won her the case, but years and years of research proves that exercise really does make you happier, calmer and more productive (and thus less likely to commit homicide). Here's how.

RUN FOR YOUR LIFE

Researchers have been looking into the connection between exercise and cognition for decades and it's clear that working out actually changes your brain, both while you're doing it and over time too. Exercise may generate new neurons in the hippocampus, which is the part of the brain associated with memory, learning and emotions. "Aerobic exercise secretes BDNF—brain-derived neurotrophic factor—which promotes the proliferation of neurons in the brain, which in turn helps with creating new pathways and boosting creativity," shares Shayamal Vallabhjee, sports scientist, psychologist and performance coach. It also reduces insulin resistance and inflammation as well as bolsters the production of growth factors, which can improve the growth of new blood vessels, and therefore, more brain cells.

WORK OUT, FEEL GOOD

But those most interested in instant gratification can look forward to endorphins—a part of the reason for the post-run euphoria you've experienced. Think of it like morphine. "Endorphins are peptides produced by the brain that bind to the brain's opiate receptors, reducing the perception of pain and causing feelings of euphoria," says fitness and wellness expert Sumaya Dalmia. But it's not just endorphins at work. Hitting the gym, going for a run or doing an intense yoga sequence also increases serotonin, dopamine and oxytocin levels, all of which ping the reward centres of the brain, making you feel proud, pleased and ready to do it all again.

Long-term, it can actually serve as a great way to handle feelings of anger, depression, anxiety or hopelessness. Exercise stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system and vagus nerve, which delivers the body to a state of rest and recovery. It is a great way to soothe your mind and distract yourself. Plus, the feeling of accomplishment at the end of a hard session can help beat the blues.

When you're cranking up the speed on the elliptical or working in more burpees and you can't breathe anymore, your body releases gamma-aminobutyric acid, or GABA, a calming neurotransmitter in response to the low levels of stress you're putting it through. Consider it exposure therapy: by giving it controlled, safe amounts of stress, your body is able to build immunity to it, so it can handle larger stressors better. However, it is important to note that you have to reach a point of pain to find this pleasure. Endorphins are a stress response, released to reduce pain and the perception of pain, so you have to get your body to a can't-breathe-and-everything-hurts state to get there. An hour or more of intense exercise is usually ideal, but a quick and intense HIIT session can work just as well, says Dalmia.

THE RUNNER'S HIGH

We've always been crediting endorphins, but newer research proves that exercising also stimulates the endocannabinoid system, the same one that CBD and THC work on. These modulatory molecules are biologically derived, but work like cannabis, and can pass through the blood-brain barrier (which endorphins can't do) to promote psychoactive effects such as reduced pain, anxiety and stress. "The endocannabinoid system controls anxiety-related regions in the brain at many different levels. The general role of this system is to control excessive activation, thereby exerting anxiolytic (anxiety reducing) effects," says Shwetha Bhatia (B.Sc, P.G Dietetics, RD), a sports consultant and the founder of Mind your Fitness. It can make you more creative too. Find yourself struggling with writer's block? "Some research suggests that endocannabinoids suppress short-term memory and cognitive activity, which may allow you to tap into your deeper subconscious. From a creative standpoint, it can switch off the noise and allow you to channel your energy and flow better," says Vallabhjee. ■

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EYEVIEW

RID BURMAN. ON PV SINDHU: ONE-SHOULDER SWIMSUIT, OOKIOH. LONG JACKET, BLONI

A place of joy

- For Olympians PV Sindhu, Lovlina Borgohain and Saikhom Mirabai Chanu, the arena is a space of fulfilment
- Indra Nooyi weighs in on a life well-lived
- Craft and patchwork take on a nostalgic undertone in Dharamsala
- Pastoral looks come out to play

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS

No stranger to challenges, this trio of Olympic winners is bringing forth athletic equality by fostering an arena for change with their fierce, competitive spirit

Photographed by **R BURMAN** Styled by **PRIYANKA KAPADIA**

Cropped vests, both **Kanika Goyal Label**. Trousers, **Varana**. Earrings, **Misho**

Dress, **Sruti Dalmia**. Earcuffs, all **Misho**

PV SINDHU

India's most marketable female athlete, the Hyderabad-based badminton star opens up to **Arun Janardhan** about expectations and the pressures of fame

Since her return from the Tokyo Olympics, PV Sindhu has been clocking miles faster than some of her on-court smashes tend to be. It's been just over two months since the event ended and the badminton player has already been to Hyderabad (where she lives), Lucknow, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Mumbai, Tirupati and Delhi, where she had ice-cream with the prime minister. It is part of an enduring celebration to mark an achievement that's rare in India—an Olympic medal.

RARE FORM

Her bronze in the women's singles, one of India's seven medals in the Games, can be seen as a triumph or a let-down, considering she has a silver from the 2016 edition and was expected to go one better. Sindhu was one of India's brightest hopes at the Games, and she carried those expectations on her lithe 5'9" frame without the trappings or tantrums of stardom, finishing her run one match short of what was anticipated. "After the semi-final [she lost to Taipei's Tai Tzu-ying] I was upset. My coach [Park Tae-sang] told me that there is a lot of difference between a bronze and the fourth position. It was tough to come out [for the next match]. When you lose, the feeling is different. But being on the podium is not easy," she says. Sindhu subsequently defeated China's He Bing Jiao for a third-place finish, looking heavenwards in relief as coach Park screamed with joy. She is now only the second individual, after wrestler Sushil Kumar, to have won two Olympic medals in post-Independence India.

> "You should not think about what people want. Think about what you want and be focused"

India's most marketable female athlete and among the world's highest earning sportswomen, Sindhu's understated middle-class values root her strongly to reality and help manage unrealistic expectations from fans and the fraternity. Her parents Vijaya and Ramana played volleyball competitively, but as fate would have it, the younger of their two daughters trotted into an adjoining badminton court at age seven. That triggered a lasting relationship with the sport, inculcating in Sindhu a heady mix of skills, technique, speed, agility and the stamina to succeed. Coach Pullela Gopi Chand moulded the talent into adulthood, guiding her to second place in Rio and her highest ranking of world No2 in 2017.

Since then, Sindhu has worked on her technique, with help over the last year and more from Park. The pandemic, in a way, helped after she secured permission to practise at the Gachibowli stadium, which allowed her the 'feel' of a large arena. Unlike 'normal' times, international players could not gauge their opponents in the badminton circuit because there have been few tournaments since March 2020. "Due to the pandemic, we didn't know how the [other] athlete was doing. That was different in Tokyo—everyone had different techniques and we had to be prepared for anything," says the 26-year-old who has her sights set on Paris 2024.

UNDER PRESSURE

The cross-country travel Sindhu has done so far is not new to her. Rio changed her life most significantly—personally and professionally, buoying her with fame and burdening her with expectations. The silver medal, which made her the first Indian badminton player to bring one home, elevated her stardom. She returned to be feted with a parade, riding atop an open double-decker bus in Hyderabad. "You see your name on billboards and children hold your posters... It was a different thing altogether. Five years later, getting a medal in Tokyo is another big thing. It's not easy."

"It's not easy at all," she repeats. "There has been pressure. Tokyo was harder than Rio because the responsibility has been a lot more. Everyone says, 'We need a medal from Sindhu.' Rio was my first time, so I was the underdog," says Sindhu, who later clinched a gold at the BWF World Championships in 2019 that added further lustre to her glowing résumé.

Sindhu is aware of the negative impact of fame and expectations on sportspeople, aspects most recently highlighted by tennis player Naomi Osaka and gymnast Simone Biles. It's not easy to do it day in and out—train, travel, compete, ride the graph of successes and disappointments. "The scrutiny will be there and people will talk and watch out for you. When you are young, you think you want to be in the limelight and want to be number one. When you get there, you have to enjoy it. You don't have to complain about it. Enjoy how it comes and let go of what is not needed," she advises.

In the last year and a half, meditating has helped her stay calm. "There will be pressure at times and I think it's okay... You should not think about what people want. Think about what you want and be focused. If you win, it's good for you and for people out there," says Sindhu, who has a measured, careful manner of speaking .What also helps is having a close-knit family. Her 10-month-old pet Labrador, Rio, a tribute to her first Olympic medal, is another useful distraction. She was asked if she would get one more in honour of Tokyo, but her dog-wary mother put her foot down.

This month, Sindhu will be back on the circuit with the Denmark Open and French Open. "Winning and losing is part of life," she says. "At the end of the day, it depends on the individual. I choose to answer with the racquet." >

Dress, **Dhruv Kapoor**. Shoes, **Christian Louboutin**. Rings, **Misho**

Jumpsuit, **Ralph Lauren** at **The Collective**. Earrings, ring; both **The Line**

LOVLINA BORGOHAIN

Determined to defy the odds, the Assamese boxer's bronze success is not just a story of resilience but one of grit that every girl can aspire to, says **Anupama Bagri**

Bodysuit, leggings; both **Bloni**. Earrings, ring; both **The Line**

Dress, **MICHAEL Michael Kors**.
Earring, **The Line**

At the end of the day that saw Lovlina Borgohain lose the semi-finals to World No1 and eventual gold medallist Busenaz Sürmeneli of Turkey, the Indian boxer wrote a heartfelt entry in her diary that read: *"Mera aim toh pura nahi hua...par mera itna achcha preparation nahi tha...mera gold ke bare mein sochna hi galat tha. Jis tarah se maine train kiya, jo injury* [Lisfranc foot injury] *mujhe hui, main Olympics khel payi, yehi bahut badi baat hai."*

A day earlier, the 23-year-old Assamese sports star beat World No2 Taiwanese middleweight boxer Chen Nien-chin in the quarters to become the third Indian boxer—and the first from her state—to win an Olympic medal (bronze in the women's welterweight category: 69kg). It finally felt real, the dream Borgohain had nurtured since childhood.

HARD TIMES

Growing up, Borgohain remembers watching her parents worry about putting the next meal on the table. Despite financial hardships, what upset her mother most was being pitied by village folks for having three girls. It only fuelled a young Borgohain's ambition to achieve something, for her mother's sake. "I've never screamed so loudly after winning any match. But after I ensured the medal for India, I let go of all the pent-up emotions of all these years. Even if I lost any competition, I'd remind myself that the Olympics is where I'd perform—and to be able to have done that took all my stress away," says Borgohain, a two-time World Championships bronze medal winner.

> "I came up with my own strategy... I told myself that I've played with fear all my life, but today, I'll play freely"

Her journey to the bronze in Tokyo was filled with challenges, on both personal and professional fronts. It was her unwavering self-belief that she could trounce any situation or opponent she was pitted against that kept her going. Soon after qualifying for the Games, the team returned to India, only to see a six-month lockdown being imposed. Borgohain was stuck at home with no equipment to train. Even after the equipment was dispatched to her, there was no clarity on the training protocols because of the uncertainty caused by the pandemic. To make matters worse, she tested positive when the national camp finally resumed training, which resulted in her missing the Italy leg of the training camp.

While recovery left her body weary, Borgohain continued training resolutely when she heard that her mother needed an emergency kidney transplant surgery. She rushed home to spend some time with her before returning to camp. But a harder blow was yet to be dealt: three months before the Olympics, the whole team tested positive and was asked to go home. It was during this time that Borgohain met and started training under sports scientist Amey Kolekar, who not only worked on her strength and conditioning, but also advised her on different types of speed exercises. But just a month away from the Olympics, Borgohain suffered a Lisfranc injury in her right foot, an injury so painful it almost dashed her hopes of competing in Tokyo.

"I can call this the turning point in my Olympic journey. Had I not got proper training at this crucial time, I wouldn't have been able to compete in Tokyo. The kind of injury I had, the foot needs to be in a plaster for a minimum of 15 days, and I only had a month. To train with such kind of pain wasn't easy, but Kolekar Sir advised me on how to train by not putting much pressure on the right foot. I was very lucky to get good guidance just when I needed it," she says.

NO FEAR

Despite so many obstacles, Borgohain, who admits she isn't the most fearless boxer around, entered Tokyo oozing confidence, bolstered by the hope that a billion Indians were praying for her success. However, she felt nervous in her first match and wasn't able to play the way she wanted to. The pressure of the opening round over, Borgohain was next up against Chen, an opponent she'd never managed to beat in four attempts.

So how did she eventually turn things around in her favour? "I didn't speak to the coach or discuss any strategy this time. Every coach has their own way of looking at things, and after every loss, they would suggest different ways to beat her. It didn't work, though. I kept losing to her. This time, I just wanted to play as I saw it. I came up with my own strategy—and it worked. There was no fear this time. I told myself that I've played with fear all my life, but today, I will just play freely."

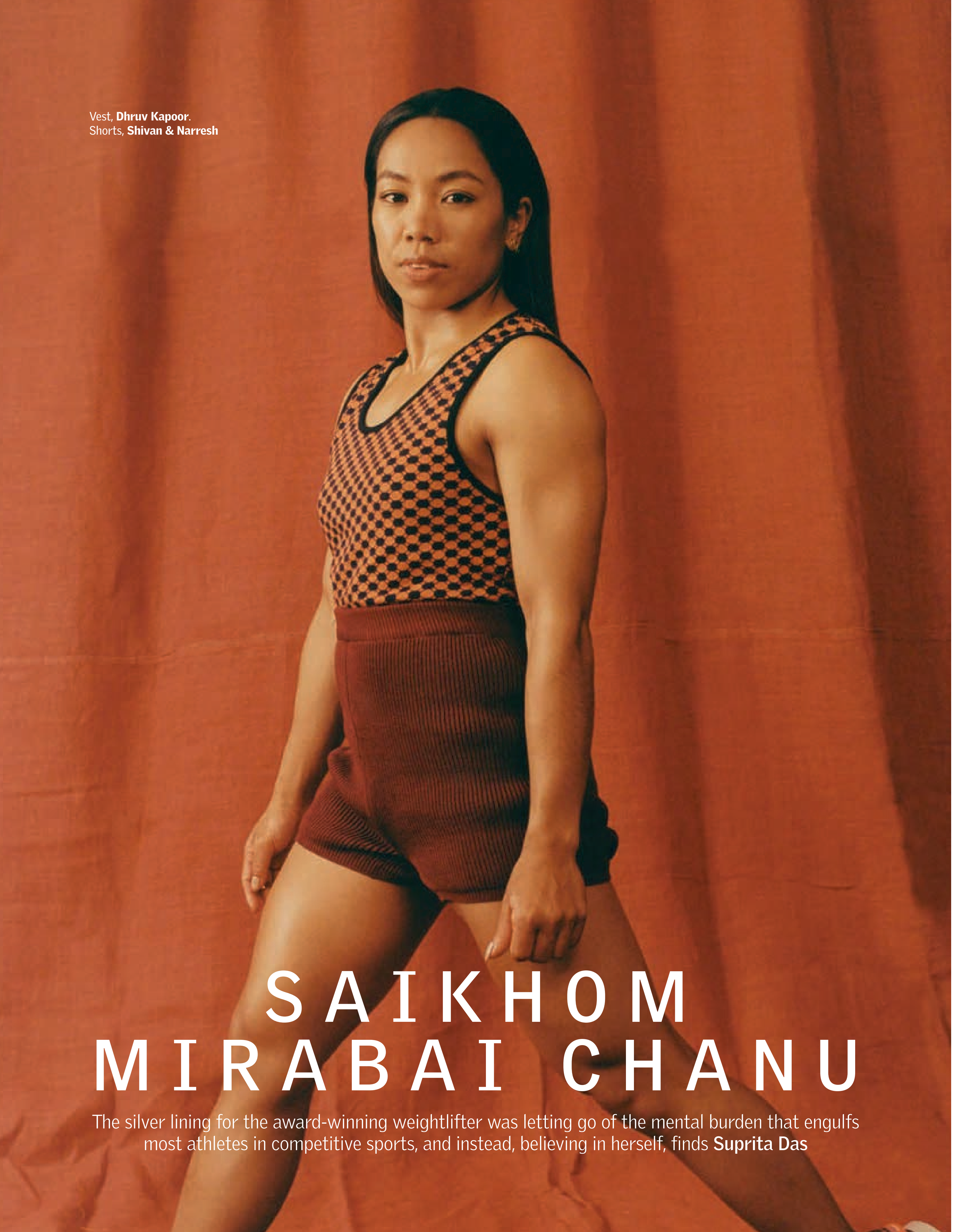
Another interesting departure from her routine was giving up meditation in the run up to Tokyo. It was her debut Olympics, but Borgohain felt that calming her mind wasn't working for her. "I didn't want to do any controlling exercises for the mind. I just wanted to set it free."

GIRL POWER

Shy, reticent and introverted, Borgohain, who moved to Guwahati at 15 to fulfil her mother's dream of silencing those who considered girls 'lesser' is now the one bringing change to her village. Concrete roads and clean drinking water are now realities for her people, thanks to her triumphs in Tokyo. As for Borgohain, she is simply happy that she's been able to do her parents proud and make life better for her villagers.

Currently, while she's making the most of her time with family, indulging in her mum's signature Assamese pork dishes, Borgohain intends to begin training for Paris 2024 soon. *"Mujhe Paris mein apna dream pura karna hai, gold laana hai,"* says the fervent pugilist, who got to know about boxing for the first time when her father showed her a newspaper clipping of Muhammad Ali. "My father told me how great a boxer he must be that we are reading about him in our tiny village. That day I thought it would be nice to take up boxing and achieve something too."

And on that front, Borgohain is well on her way. >



Vest, **Dhruv Kapoor**.
Shorts, **Shivan & Narresh**

SAIKHOM MIRABAI CHANU

The silver lining for the award-winning weightlifter was letting go of the mental burden that engulfs most athletes in competitive sports, and instead, believing in herself, finds **Suprita Das**

Turtleneck top, **ADK by Avishi Dayal Kalra**.
Trackpants, **Adidas**.
Ring, **Louis Vuitton**

A month after they returned from Tokyo, Saikhom Mirabai Chanu and Vijay Sharma are back at the gymnasium in Patiala's National Institute of Sports. Chanu, 27, is swinging a kettlebell up and down, then from left to right, as Sharma monitors. For the sports star-coach duo, this is their natural habitat, one where they feel at peace.

The last 30 days have been unlike any Chanu has ever experienced in her life. The weightlifter, who won silver in the 49kg category at the Tokyo Olympics, has had to swap her usual eat-train-sleep-repeat routine for a packed event-interview-shoot-repeat schedule. In this time, Chanu has met countless ministers, sports stars, film stars and several other important people. Everywhere she goes—a photo shoot, a television studio, a felicitation function—they want a selfie, they want to get as close as possible to her medal, perhaps even touch it. And they always order her a pizza.

LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE

"I've been so busy since the time I arrived!" she exclaims. And arrive in style she did, exiting the international terminal in Delhi surrounded by security guards and cops, all of them a solid feet and a half taller and several kilos heavier. Everybody wanted to catch a glimpse of the champion, but Chanu's face became increasingly concealed as the stack of marigold garlands around her neck grew taller—although her swagger, as she walked past them, waving and flashing a victory sign, was hard to miss. Once she returned to Nongpok Kakching, her village in Manipur's East Imphal district, it was a while before the superstar could finally sit on the floor with her family and relish a home-cooked meal after two years. "I know all this—meetings, functions—is important too. All these people wanted me to do well and cheered me on to win a medal." And so, Chanu obliges all their requests, always with a smile that lights up a room.

> "Weightlifting is not dangerous for girls... Look at me. If I can do it, all of you can"

The high-watt smile did not leave her face on July 24 at the Tokyo International Forum, even when she couldn't complete her final lift. Attempting to lift 117kg (approximately two-and-a-half-times her body weight), Chanu pulled the bar clean and managed to rest it on her shoulder blades. But as she attempted to bring it overhead, her knees shook, her elbows trembled. The bar came crashing down, and Chanu squatted on the floor, her disappointment evident. The very next second, she was back on her feet with the broadest smile she could muster and a wave of arms. She had done enough—a previous clean lift of 115kg, and 87kg in the snatch before that, adding up to a total of 202kg had won her the silver—and redemption.

"I almost forgot where I was standing," she recollects with a laugh. "Then the announcer took my name and I realised, 'Oh, this is the Olympic podium!'" In an arena sans spectators and on a podium where masked victors girdled medals around their own necks, Chanu's silver opened India's account in Tokyo on the very first day of the Games.

MIND GAMES

Chanu has what you would call a sunny disposition. And it inevitably shielded her arduous journey to Olympic silver. Five years ago, competing at her first Olympics in Rio, Chanu had crashed out of the competition after failing to register even one lift in the clean and jerk section of the event. It crushed her confidence, and the then 21-year-old cried all the way from the arena to her room in the Olympic Village, slipping into a protracted depressive episode in the months to come. "I still don't know what happened to me that day," she says. "It felt like I had forgotten what to do."

Back in India, she was ready to give up weightlifting altogether, as she felt she had let everybody down. "Everyone told me I was young, and it was not the end of the world—my mother and my coach especially. But it was very tough for me to get out of that zone. It was a combination of disappointment, anger and losing all hope." Her supportive family's secure environment and a series of counselling sessions helped her regain her confidence and self-belief.

WINNING STREAK

It wasn't long before the big medals started coming in. Kicking it off was the World Championships gold in 2017, following which she got studs in the shape of the Olympic rings designed for herself. In 2018, she became the Commonwealth Games champion, but had to pull out of the Asian Games and World Championships due to a lower back injury. The same injury flared up in 2020, worsening her back and confining her to her room in Patiala (she was training there for the Olympics at the National Institute of Sports) for almost two months during the nationwide lockdown. By the time restrictions had been partially lifted and training resumed, there was plenty to worry about. "I'd been lifting heavy for so many years, but it never hurt so much," she recalls. Around this time, the postponed dates for the Tokyo Olympics were also announced. "My shoulders and back were so stiff that I needed a full day's rest after one session, which wasn't normal."

It took a trip to St Louis, USA, to get her condition diagnosed by lifter-turned-physiotherapist Dr Aaron Horschig. Once the biomechanical flaws in her technique were identified, it didn't take long for the irrepressible athlete to resume training without any major discomfort. The new Chanu was stronger—physically and mentally—making her international return with a new world record and a bronze medal at the Asian Championships in Tashkent earlier this year. "My competition was against myself and my own body at that time," she sagely admits.

Olympic medal in the bag, Chanu now has her eyes set on next year's Commonwealth Games and Asian Games. She signs off with a message that is likely to inspire many girls in India: "Weightlifting is not dangerous for girls, it is completely safe. Look at me. If I can do it, all of you can." ■

Cropped vest, **Zara**. Shorts, **H&M**. Jacket, **Dhruv Kapoor**

Hair and makeup: Ashima Kapoor (Lovlina, Mirabai); Mitesh Rajani/Feat Artists (PV)
Hair and makeup assistant: Laeek Ahmad (Lovlina, Mirabai)
Assistant stylists: Naheed Driver; Parvati Mangal
Production: Imran Khatri Productions
Visuals editor: Jay Modi
Entertainment director: Megha Mehta

BACKYARD BRUNCH

Balloon sleeves and ruffles offer a sweet fashion spread.

Dress, **Sleeper**

UP-COUNTRY

FARM GIRL

Lean into insouciant elegance for your country walks.

Woollen tank top, **Valentino**. Woollen silk blend skirt, **Dior**. Boots, **Alaïa**

Embrace the new season's softer side in some of its most romantic pastoral looks

Photographed by **DANA MARLENSEN** Styled by **CLARE RICHARDSON**

KNITTING DREAMS

Earthy browns with a pop of red equals the perfect formula for knitwear.

Woollen cardigan, skirt; both **Paul Smith**. Bra, **Cuup**. Crochet hat, **The Elder Statesman**

THINKING WOMAN

Pure seduction in pristine
white and apple red.

Dress, **Dolce & Gabbana**

BUTTERFLY EFFECT

Revel in noughties nostalgia.

Knitted dress, **Blumarine**

LAY BACK

Lounge wear has stepped up a gear. A knitted romper is vital verandah attire.

Cashmere playsuit, **Salvatore Ferragamo**. Cashmere socks, **The Elder statesman**

COCOONING COMFORT

Artwork on a blanket elevates the everyday with extreme finesse.

Sleeveless knit, **Alaïa**. Woollen blanket, **Shawanda Corbett X JW Anderson**

HANG TIME

Seeking our own personal pastoral fantasies via floral house dresses.

Dress, **Balenciaga**

Hair: Tomo Jidai
Makeup: Romy Soleimani
Model: Paloma Elsesser
Production: Creative Chaos
Set design: Kadu Lennox
Digital artwork: 4C Imaging
Location: Greenlawn Farm; Kinderhook Farm/New York

VIEW FROM THE TOP

From navigating motherhood without a smartphone to breaking the glass ceiling in perfectly tailored suits, **Indra Nooyi**, the former chairperson and CEO of PepsiCo, spills her life lessons outlining how she became the first South Asian female CEO of a Fortune 500 company. By **Shahnaz Siganporia**

Be it forming an all-girl rock band called the LogRhythms (the girls loved their maths) for a high-school variety show or striding out to bat for her college team in cricket whites (borrowed from her father), Indra Nooyi's first memoir, *My Life In Full* (Hachette India), is filled with riveting tidbits from the former CEO's early life. Charming anecdotes aside, Nooyi also uses her first outing as an author to give readers an inside view into what it really means to be a woman of colour and make it big in corporate America.

In her intimate autobiography, Nooyi, who turns 66 this month, underscores the importance of having a supportive spouse, the challenges and joys of being a working mother ("You three make me whole," she says of her husband and daughters, Preetha and Tara), and the absolute non-negotiable of having a support system that includes childcare and safe spaces ("Once you're within striking distance from the CEO's office...the idea of balancing work with any kind of normal life isn't practical").

Nooyi doesn't shy away from spotlighting the harsh realities of ruling the 'corporate-dom' in the book, even as she pads her own struggles as the sole woman in most boardrooms. Which explains why she concludes her memoir with a manifesto of sorts, of all that is wanting for women to succeed in the workplace. It'd be an understatement to say that Nooyi is exceptional. There aren't many South Asian women who have reached the CEO's office of a >

DAVE PUENTE

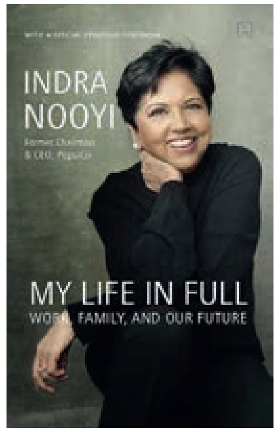
DAVE PUENTE

> "In today's world, we need to stop looking at it as a work-life balance. It's more about work-life management"

Fortune 500 company, but she's the first in what will hopefully be a long list. Hers is a story that needs to be told more, seen more and heard more. Over Zoom, Nooyi, in her signature pearl studs and perfectly coiffed hair, discusses why it was time to tell her story.

Shahnaz Siganporia: *My Life In Full* wasn't the book you set out to write, but the one you eventually did. Tell us how your first title came into its own?
Indra Nooyi: When I stepped down as CEO of PepsiCo, I had two big questions thrown at me: the first was why a woman didn't replace me, and the second was as to how I managed to get to the top of the corporate world while staying married and raising two kids. The first was more complex. It's a question rarely asked of men when they hand over the reins, but the question points to a larger problem that still exists. I have spent a large chunk of my working life building capacities for women at work, but there's still a long way to go. We have to build women up in large numbers to get to a pool that we can draw from—the pipeline is not just leaky, it's broken. We have to talk and do more to make women stay in paid work—and actually thrive, grow and feel great.

As for the second question, I didn't have a secret manual on how to make it work—there were a series of events that happened in my life, and at every point there were trade-offs and decisions I had to make to forge ahead. I had initially imagined the book as a series of articles and essays, but it felt too dry. As I began to think more about the answers to these questions, my story began to emerge as the backdrop against which I could address issues, themes and concerns that I wanted to talk about.



In her debut book, Indra Nooyi, the trailblazing former chairperson and CEO of PepsiCo, captures her journey from India to global ascent while imparting some of her most important life lessons

SS: You take us on this incredible journey of being a very big fish in a very big pond, a lot of which is about navigating your work, home and family. How did you reconcile the never-ending debate around work-life balance?
IN: The corporate world I walked into all those decades ago was a very different one from today. The positive side for me was that people wanted me to succeed because they said, "Hey, she's smart and she's doing a good job." And I was provided the support I needed to succeed. The negative part was that there were hardly any women in executive roles. When I was having kids and raising them, there was no technology like we have today—no FaceTime or Zoom, even cell phones were just making an appearance. There was no way to keep in touch with your family. In a way, technology has built a great support system.

I've mentioned this incident in the book where I was driving around Greenwich and saw a school bus pulling up and all the mums and dads picking up their children. This was during the work-from-home phase of the pandemic, where parents and guardians could take a quick break from work, pick up their kids and return to work. It was a very important scene that played out because I couldn't do that for my children. I was a prisoner to the office a lot of the time. I loved being in the office but I also loved being at home. And a lot of the time, the lines between work and personal life were blurry. I think in today's world, we need to stop looking at it as a work-life balance. It's more about work-life management. How do we meld it all? Whether through flexible work hours, flexible workspaces or figuring out how to be there in critical times for your family, I think we need to now focus on balancing the entirety of our lives. We need to use technology and support systems judiciously to be comfortable with the choices we're making and ensure they work for us and give us strength, not stress.

SS: You don't shy away from confronting tough questions and being vulnerable when you talk about the melding of work and life in the book. Was it difficult sharing your own story?
IN: The one thing I was clear about from the start is that this book had to be authentic. I knew I couldn't write an everything-was-perfect book, because it wasn't. When you have a career as long and difficult as mine, there are a lot of issues that come up along the way. But I was also clear that the book would not be a tell-all. What I wanted it to be was an honest story of the arc of my life which laid out the challenges, problems, stresses and dilemmas, alongside the achievements and joy. And I also wanted people to realise that it took a village, which helped me every step of the way. I did not do it all myself and I wanted to acknowledge that. The angels and mentors in my life have played an outsized role and they have supported me and pulled me up all through my career. Work is messy and fragile, families are messy and fragile, and I wanted my book to reflect my reality and my life lessons.

SS: When it comes to your leadership style, one lesson that stands out is the 'zooming in and out' approach. Tell us more about what this method means to you?
IN: As I was writing the book and reflecting on my life, I realised 'zooming in and out', as I call it, became second nature. It basically means to have the big-picture vision, even as you acknowledge the minutiae of every detail. This began early in my career because, as an analyst, you have to know the details. You learn business at a very granular level when you begin, but as you move up, there's a tendency to hover over the business at 30,000 feet. Of course, it's a great feeling because you never have to get into the nitty-gritty, but for me it was the combination of both that did it. I could zoom out and think in a very strategic way, but then I would also zoom in to think about how said strategy could be implemented.

If I recommend a change, I have to understand how it will land in a business and how it can be executed on the ground—be it a single salesperson or a manufacturing plant. The scan-and-sign-documents style wasn't for me. I would give it a quick read and know exactly where the errors lay because I was not approaching it from a "Does it have the wide strategic conclusions in place?" point of view, but rather from the gut of knowing the strategic direction and the details of that business at every level.

SS: You've also had a keen eye on what's coming next, whether it's digitalisation, making efforts towards sustainability or focusing on health. What made you not resist change and embrace it at every stage of your life and work?
IN: I think my training at Boston Consulting Group (BCG) made all the difference. What BCG taught me was to think, plan and act for the future. It also taught me to ignore politics and stay true to where the world is going and where you think the company should move. That was drilled into my head and engraved into my thinking. So every role that I came into, I felt my job was to lay out a vision for the future and make sure the company's direction was consistent with what I thought the future was—based on research and facts, not just a gut feeling. Armed with facts, figures and details, I would go forth and make my case. CEOs don't last forever, but companies can. I never ran a company for my term, I ran a company keeping in mind the bigger future out there.

Indra Nooyi's My Life In Full *(Hachette India) was published on September 28, 2021* ■

Crafting magic

SPOTLIGHT ON

Bold ikat patterns plus nubby knits—we're calling it collage therapy.

Sweater, **Saloni Jain Label**. Multicolored blouse, **House of Wandering Silk**. Knitted crop top, **Knobby Knuckles**. Trousers, **Saaksha & Kinni**. Long beaded necklace, **Savio Jon**. Floral beaded necklace, **Ineze**. Beaded necklace, ring; both **Label Graph**. Bag, shoes; both **Fendi**

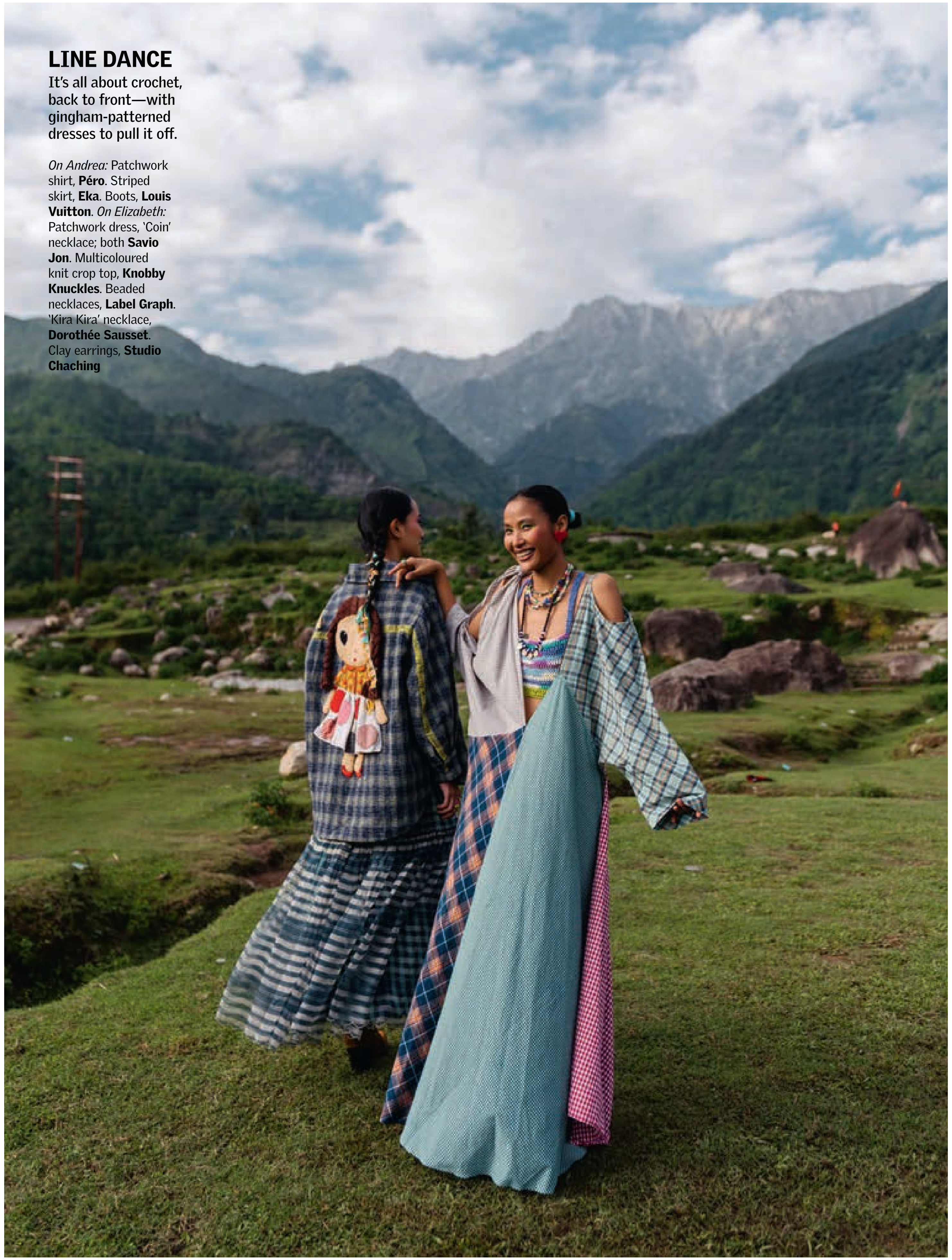
Tangible, textural and tactile, the latest craftcore trend is a mix and match of sensorial pairings. Shot in the hills of Dharamsala, knit meets patchwork, weaves combine with prints, and layers unwind to reveal a tapestry of nostalgic memories

Photographed by **TENZIN LHAGYAL** Styled by **PRIYANKA KAPADIA**

IN TOUCH

Interwoven checks and stripes find a happy marriage in handmade jewellery.

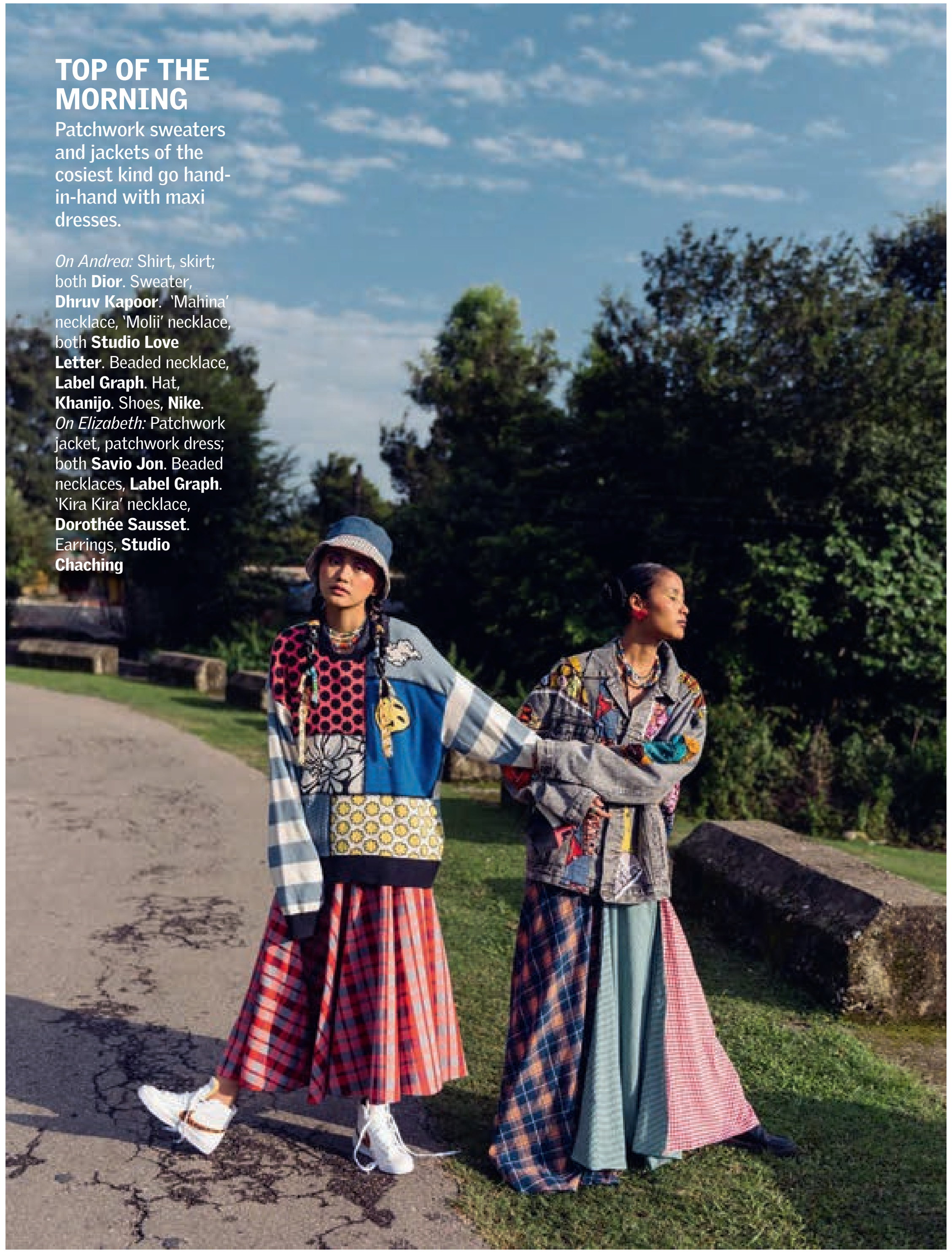
On Andrea: Shirt, **Péro**. 'Molii' necklace, **Studio Love Letter**. Beaded necklace, **Ineze**. Earcuff, **Myrha by Rhea**. *On Elizabeth:* Patchwork dress, **Ka-Sha**. Long beaded necklace, **Savio Jon**. 'Star and Pearl' beaded necklace, **Label Graph**. Floral beaded necklace, **Ineze**. 'Mahina' necklace, **Studio Love Letter**. 'Daisy' ring, **SNA Studios.** Glass rings, all **Label Graph**. Bangles, all **Hermès**. Scrunchie, **House of Wandering Silk**



LINE DANCE

It's all about crochet, back to front—with gingham-patterned dresses to pull it off.

On Andrea: Patchwork shirt, **Péro**. Striped skirt, **Eka**. Boots, **Louis Vuitton**. *On Elizabeth:* Patchwork dress, 'Coin' necklace; both **Savio Jon**. Multicoloured knit crop top, **Knobby Knuckles**. Beaded necklaces, **Label Graph**. 'Kira Kira' necklace, **Dorothée Sausset**. Clay earrings, **Studio Chaching**



TOP OF THE MORNING

Patchwork sweaters and jackets of the cosiest kind go hand-in-hand with maxi dresses.

On Andrea: Shirt, skirt; both **Dior**. Sweater, **Dhruv Kapoor**. 'Mahina' necklace, 'Molii' necklace, both **Studio Love Letter**. Beaded necklace, **Label Graph**. Hat, **Khanijo**. Shoes, **Nike**. *On Elizabeth:* Patchwork jacket, patchwork dress; both **Savio Jon**. Beaded necklaces, **Label Graph**. 'Kira Kira' necklace, **Dorothée Sausset**. Earrings, **Studio Chaching**

TAKE TWO

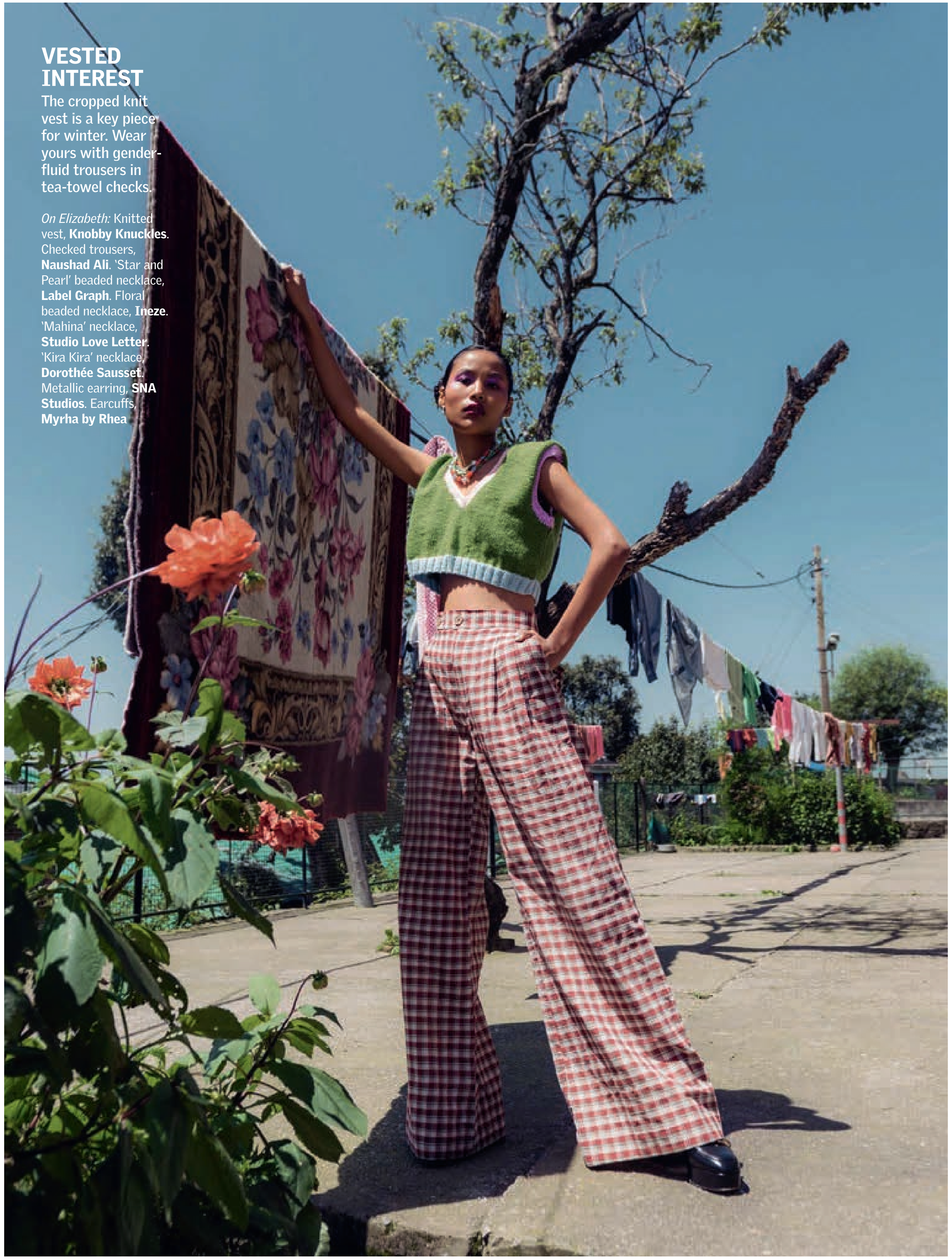
Trans-seasonal layers of the granddad variety go best over man-style shirts

On Andrea: Pyjama shirt, **I Was A Sari**. Sweater vest, **SWGT**. Earcuff, **Myrha by Rhea**. Enamel earcuff, enamel rings; both **Misho**. Metallic ring, **Olio Stories**. Clay ring, **Studio Chaching**. Pearl earring, **Studio Love Letter**. *On Elizabeth:* Tie-dye shirt, **Truine.** Cropped sweater, **Shradha Kochhar**. 'Star and Pearl' beaded necklace, **Label Graph**. Floral beaded necklace, **Ineze**. 'Mahina' necklace, **Studio Love Letter**

ROCK SOLID

Tapestry prints come together to create an entirely individual take on comfort dressing.

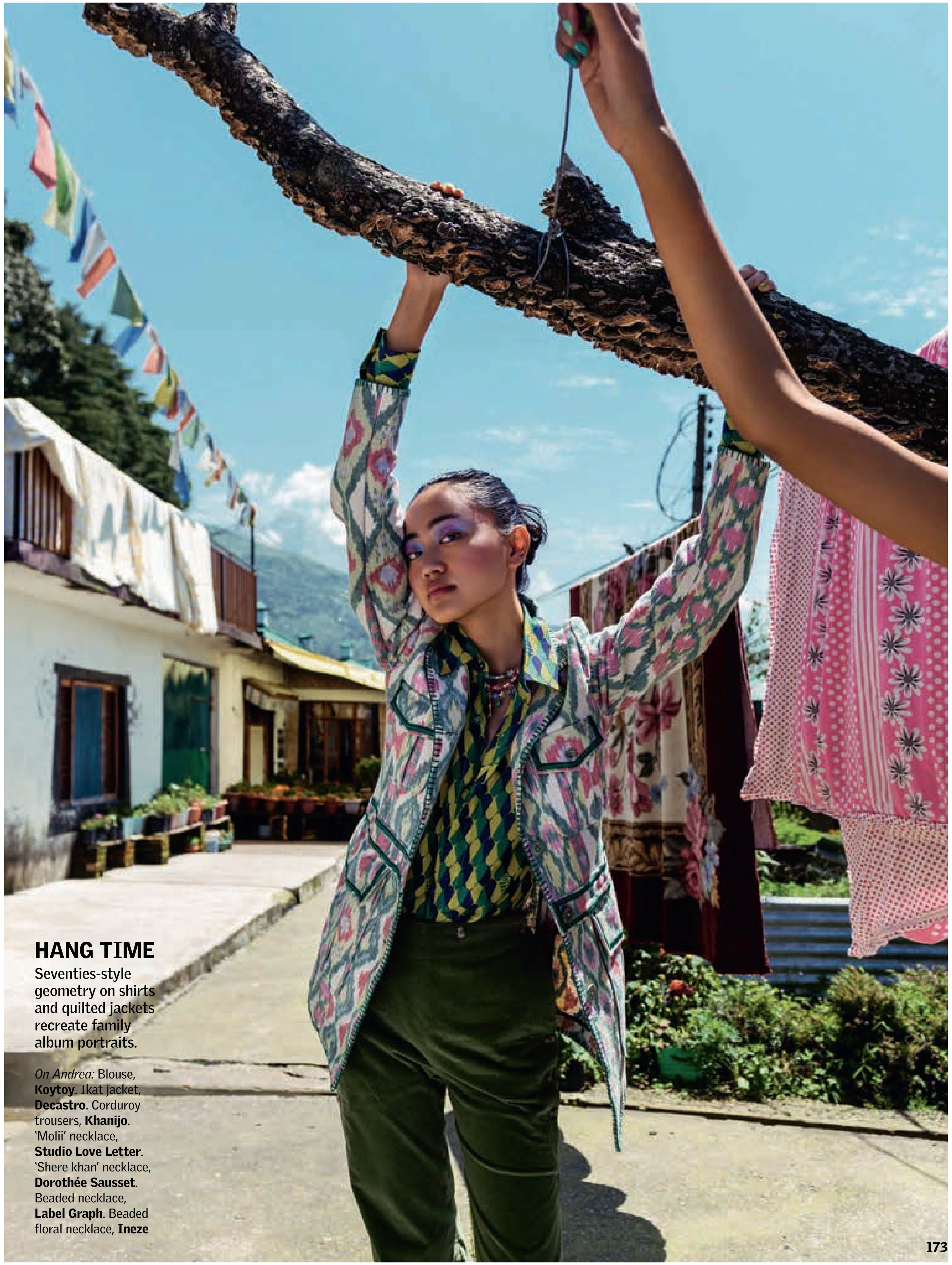
On Elizabeth: Floral dress, **AK-OK by Anamika Khanna**. Jacket, **Dhruv Kapoor**. Trousers, **Verb by Pallavi Singhee**. 'Daisy' ring, **SNA Studios**. Glass rings, **Label Graph**. Clay earrings, **Studio Chaching**



VESTED INTEREST

The cropped knit vest is a key piece for winter. Wear yours with gender-fluid trousers in tea-towel checks.

On Elizabeth: Knitted vest, **Knobby Knuckles**. Checked trousers, **Naushad Ali**. 'Star and Pearl' beaded necklace, **Label Graph**. Floral beaded necklace, **Ineze**. 'Mahina' necklace, **Studio Love Letter**. 'Kira Kira' necklace, **Dorothée Sausset**. Metallic earring, **SNA Studios**. Earcuffs, **Myrha by Rhea**



HANG TIME

Seventies-style geometry on shirts and quilted jackets recreate family album portraits.

On Andrea: Blouse, **Koytoy**. Ikat jacket, **Decastro**. Corduroy trousers, **Khanijo**. 'Molii' necklace, **Studio Love Letter**. 'Shere khan' necklace, **Dorothée Sausset**. Beaded necklace, **Label Graph**. Beaded floral necklace, **Ineze**

IN THE FEELS

Cocooning shapes in houndstooth and terry create comfort at their core.

On Andrea: Blouse, jacket; both **Koytoy**. Houndstooth jacket, **Khanijo**. 'Molii' necklace, **Studio Love Letter**. 'Shere Khan' necklace, **Dorothée Sausset**. Beaded necklaces, glass rings; all **Label Graph**. Beaded floral necklace, **Ineze**. Earcuff, **Myrha by Rhea**

SHEER GENIUS

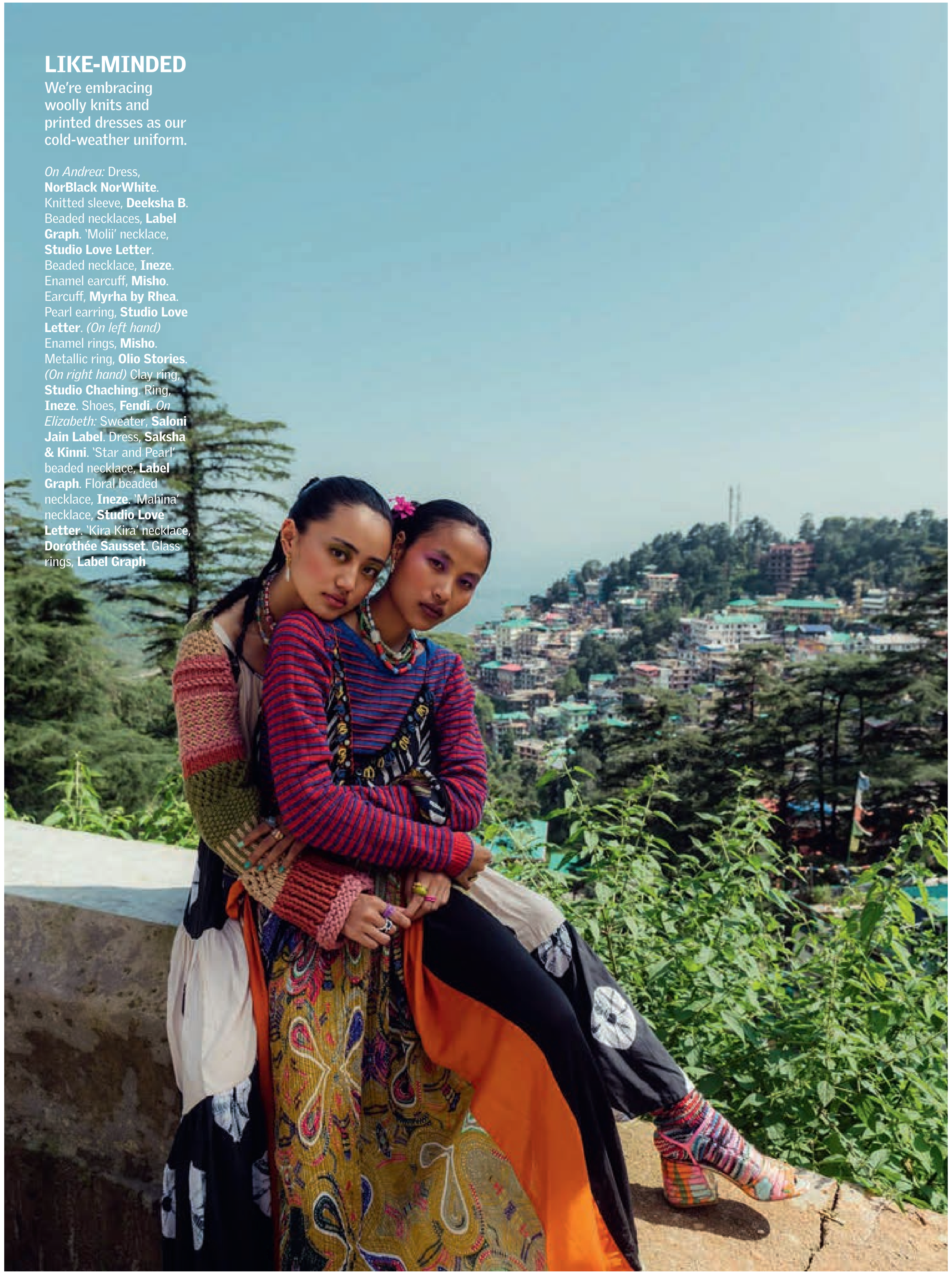
Technicolour ruffles add texture to diaphanous lavender.

On Elizabeth: Dress, **NorBlack NorWhite**. Metallic earring, 'Daisy' ring; both **SNA Studios**. Earcuffs, all **Myrha by Rhea**

LEAN IN

We're reaching for roomy dresses in candy colours for our happiness quotient.

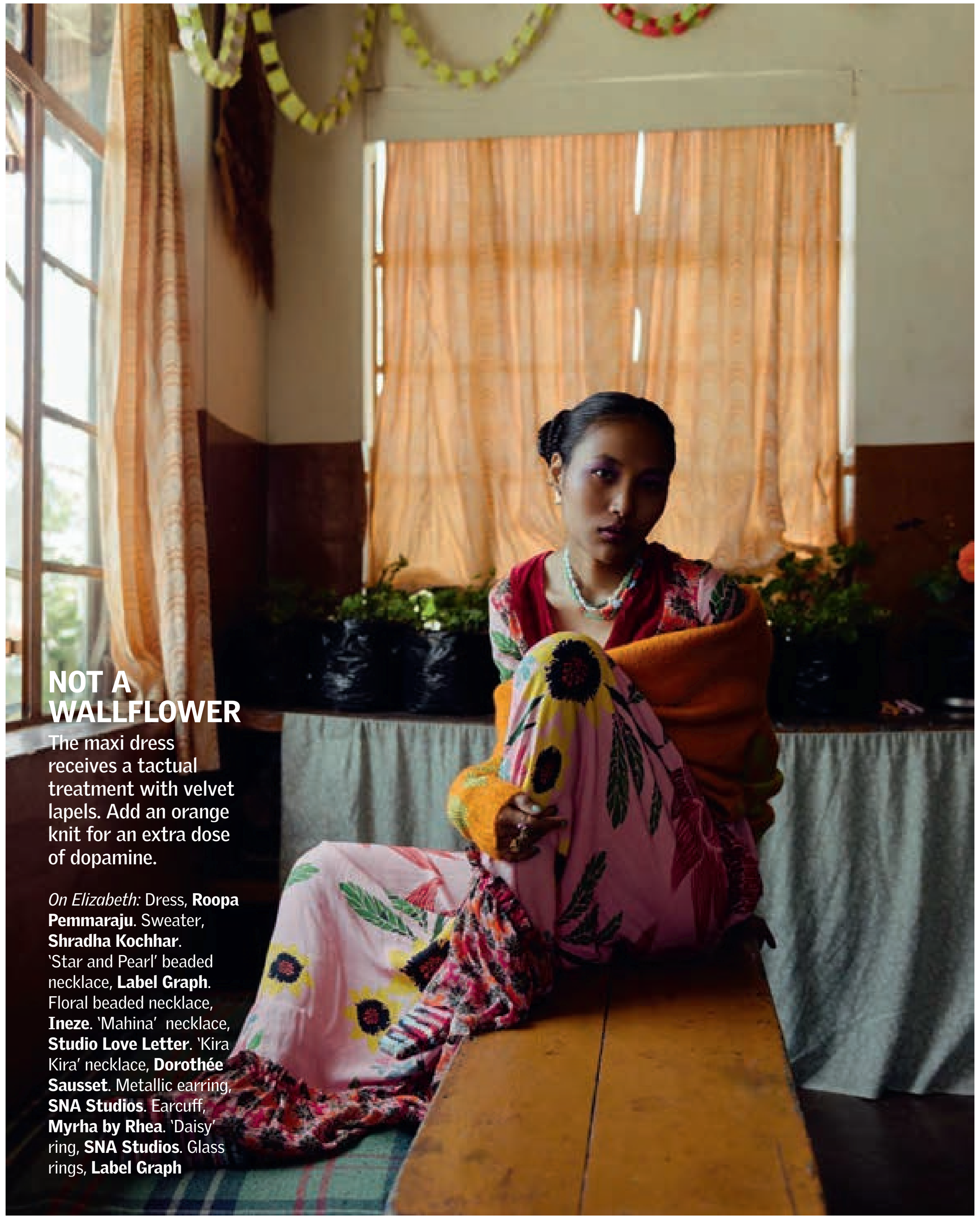
On Elizabeth: Sheer Dress, **NorBlack NorWhite**. Dress, **Roopa Pemmaraju**. Metallic earring, **SNA Studios**. Earcuffs, all **Myrha by Rhea**. 'Star and Pearl' beaded necklace, **Label Graph**. Floral beaded necklace, **Ineze**. 'Mahina' necklace, **Studio Love Letter**. *On Andrea:* Dress, **NorBlack NorWhite**. Knitted crop top, **Knobby Knuckles**. 'Molii' necklace, **Studio Love Letter**. 'Shere Khan' necklace, **Dorothée Sausset**. Beaded necklaces, **Label Graph**. Boots, **Louis Vuitton**



LIKE-MINDED

We're embracing woolly knits and printed dresses as our cold-weather uniform.

On Andrea: Dress, **NorBlack NorWhite**. Knitted sleeve, **Deeksha B**. Beaded necklaces, **Label Graph**. 'Molii' necklace, **Studio Love Letter**. Beaded necklace, **Ineze**. Enamel earcuff, **Misho**. Earcuff, **Myrha by Rhea**. Pearl earring, **Studio Love Letter**. *(On left hand)* Enamel rings, **Misho**. Metallic ring, **Olio Stories**. *(On right hand)* Clay ring, **Studio Chaching**. Ring, **Ineze**. Shoes, **Fendi**. *On Elizabeth*: Sweater, **Saloni Jain Label**. Dress, **Saksha & Kinni**. 'Star and Pearl' beaded necklace, **Label Graph**. Floral beaded necklace, **Ineze**. 'Mahina' necklace, **Studio Love Letter**. 'Kira Kira' necklace, **Dorothée Sausset**. Glass rings, **Label Graph**



NOT A WALLFLOWER

The maxi dress receives a tactual treatment with velvet lapels. Add an orange knit for an extra dose of dopamine.

On Elizabeth: Dress, **Roopa Pemmaraju**. Sweater, **Shradha Kochhar**. 'Star and Pearl' beaded necklace, **Label Graph**. Floral beaded necklace, **Ineze**. 'Mahina' necklace, **Studio Love Letter**. 'Kira Kira' necklace, **Dorothée Sausset**. Metallic earring, **SNA Studios**. Earcuff, **Myrha by Rhea**. 'Daisy' ring, **SNA Studios**. Glass rings, **Label Graph**

AT HOME

Wind-down pyjamas get an evening turnaround with a patchwork coat.

Pyjama set, **Louis Vuitton**. Jacket, **Studio Medium**. 'Coin' necklace, **Savio Jon**. Beaded necklaces, ring; all **Label Graph**. 'Kira Kira' necklace, **Dorothée Sausset**. Clay earrings, **Studio Chaching**

Art direction: Swaminathan Iyer
Photographer's agency: A Little Fly
Models: Elizabeth Mech/Anima; Andrea Kevichusa/Anima
Hair and makeup: Mitesh Rajani/Feat Artists
Assistant Stylists: Naheed Driver; Tenzin Pema
Production: ALF x Film & Location
Visuals editor: Jay Modi
Special thanks to: Vikramaditya Kukreja; Upper TCV school and the people of Dharamsala

STREET SCENES

Cross-stitch embroideries pepper idle chats in the alleyway.

On Andrea: Sweater, **Saloni Jain Label**. Shirt, pants; both **Harago**. 'Molii' necklace, **Studio Love Letter**. Beaded necklace, **Ineze**. Clay rings, **Studio Chaching**. *On Elizabeth:* Dress, **Eka**. Beaded necklaces, **Label Graph**. 'Daisy' ring, **SNA Studios**. Clay earrings, rings (worn in hair); all **Studio Chaching**

GALLERY

My happy place

From the mellifluous strains of a tanpura to the sweeping view of heritage buildings in a metropolis, there's no one magic formula to finding your bliss. But somewhere between nostalgia and hope, these eight creatives seem to have secured the key to spaces that bring them joy

EDITED BY **MEGHA MAHINDRU**

CULTURE

ERRIKOS ANDREOU

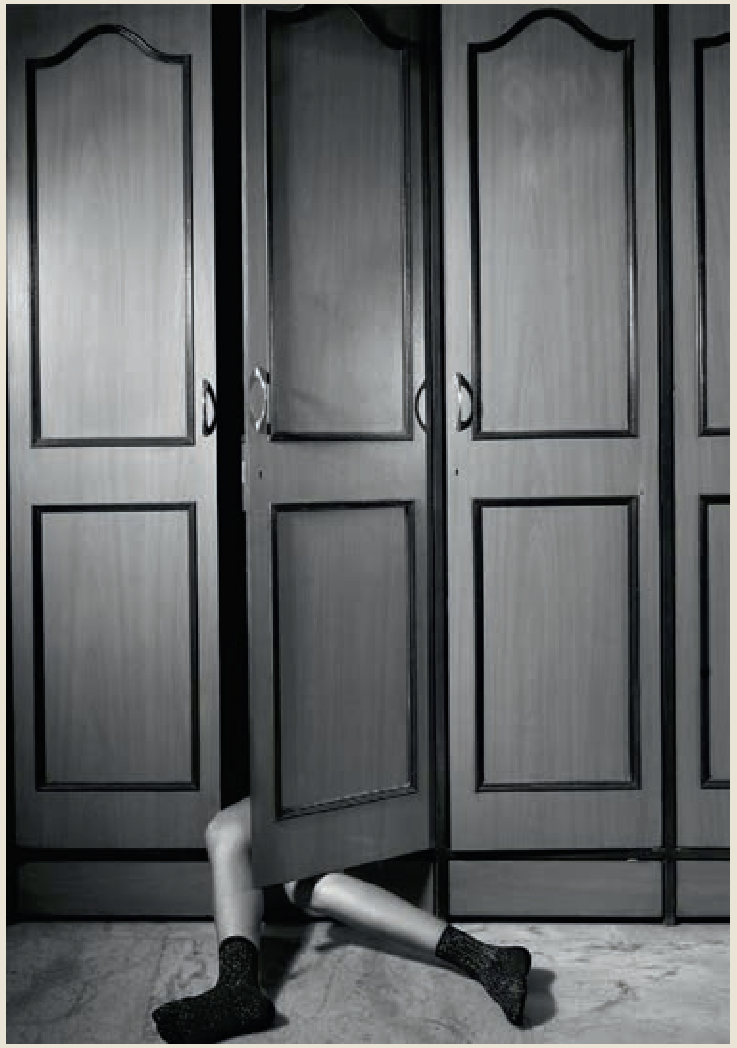
1

A SENSE OF BELONGING
BY ADITI RAO HYDARI

"My happy place is around the people I love and those who love me. During the lockdown, I spent most of my time in Hyderabad. I was back in my family home—that of my beloved maternal grandmother, who I call Ammama. My grandmother, Shanta Rameshwar Rao, was a storyteller. My summer holidays were spent in her company, where she taught me badminton and cycling and when I was older, driving. She was always welcoming. None of the doors were locked and I could bring friends home anytime. There was always food, a place to play and the promise of a wonderful story. She made characters come alive, and encouraged an environment of free-spiritedness and learning. She taught us to be fearless and curious, to ask questions and to explore. She shaped so much of who I am today. So happy places for me are spaces filled with nostalgia, family and love. It's about those memories that are ignited by the little things, be it the sounds of my mother playing the tanpura or the soothing fragrance of the parijat flower (night-flowering jasmine) that dotted my grandmother's driveway."

- As told to Udita Jhunjhunwala >

Actor Aditi Rao Hydari will be seen in Mani Ratnam's next film, Ponniyin Selvan



2

THE REMAINS OF THE DAY
BY PRARTHNA SINGH

"The past year and a half has been an incredibly strange time. Hiding from all the heartbreaking news and managing to make an image that depicts the emotions that I've been engulfed in, is my version of a happy place."

Photographer Prarthna Singh's recent work includes documenting Dior's Chambre de Soie at the Chanakya School of Craft in Mumbai and collaborating with The ReFashion Hub to raise awareness on fast fashion

3

CITY OF DREAMS

BY ROOSHAD SHROFF

"My happy place is my new office. Tucked away in South Mumbai, with an abundance of sunlight, and a sweeping view of heritage buildings such as the neoclassical Asiatic Society of Mumbai, the entire space is filled with an 'old Bombay' charm. Between the nostalgic architectural bones of the city I love and a space that I've designed from scratch, it's the perfect coming together of what was and what can be. It is where I get to do what I love, even as I stay inspired."

Architect and designer Rooshad Shroff's recent collections include fluted marble vases and pressed flower tables

COURTESY SAM KULAVOOR/TARQ

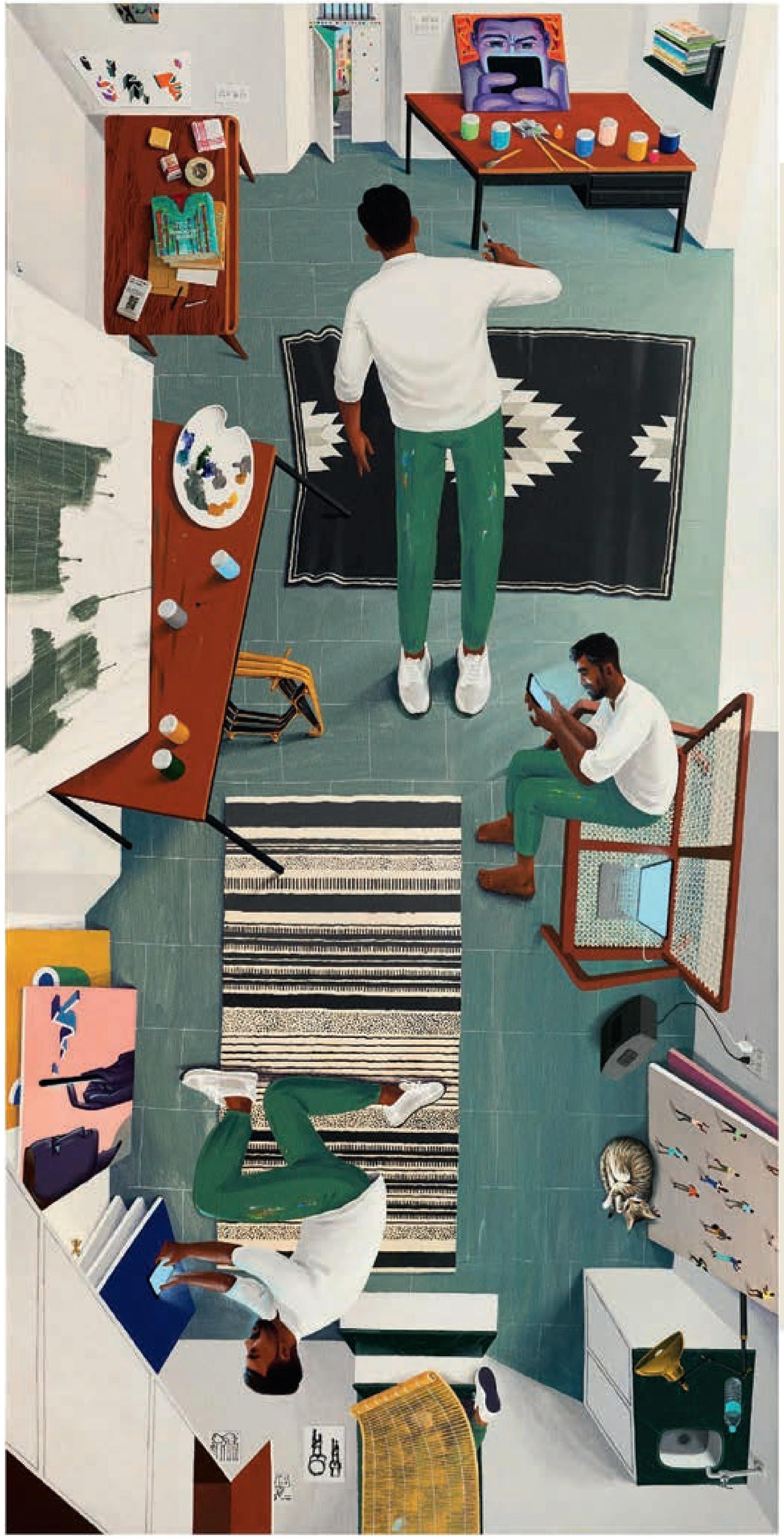
RAISING HOPE

BY ANJALI SUD

4

"My two-year-old son Saavan and I have a reading chair in his nursery. When he was younger, he would quietly sit on my lap and I would read his favourite books. He's now at an age where he doesn't want to be read to anymore, he wants to do it himself. And while he can't read yet, he sits and flips through the same books, pretending to read them to me and his stuffed panda. I love watching him grow and become independent, and I'll always cherish those hours he spent in his mama's lap. Everyone told me motherhood would change my life. What I wasn't expecting was how it would change my life at work. I am a stronger, more empathetic leader because of my experience as a mum."

Anjali Sud is the CEO of Vimeo, a video-streaming platform



5

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

BY SAMEER KULAVOOR

"My studio has to be my happy place (more 'zen' than happy, probably). I work alone and when I truly begin to occupy the studio, the space becomes part of my mental environment. Over time, objects that accumulate in the space or things that are thrown out of the space can be seen as a manifestation of one's personality. Even the geography of the space, its surroundings or character of the architecture, have an impact on one's daily state of mind and resulting work, I believe. While most of my work is about the experience of life in a dynamic and sometimes stressful, fast-changing metropolis, my work process of mark-making itself is extremely slow and analogue, leaving the city outside while working inside the studio. For me, being completely immersed in the act of making in the studio is therapeutic and calming. *58* is a painting of my previous studio. I have since moved to a new space, but this work remains symbolic of my idea of a studio space. The simultaneous presence of the figure in the middle of different activities in different parts of the space blurs the sense of time—it's pretty much my day in the studio."

58 was part of artist Sameer Kulavoor's solo show You Are All Caught Up *earlier this year at TARQ Gallery, Mumbai* >

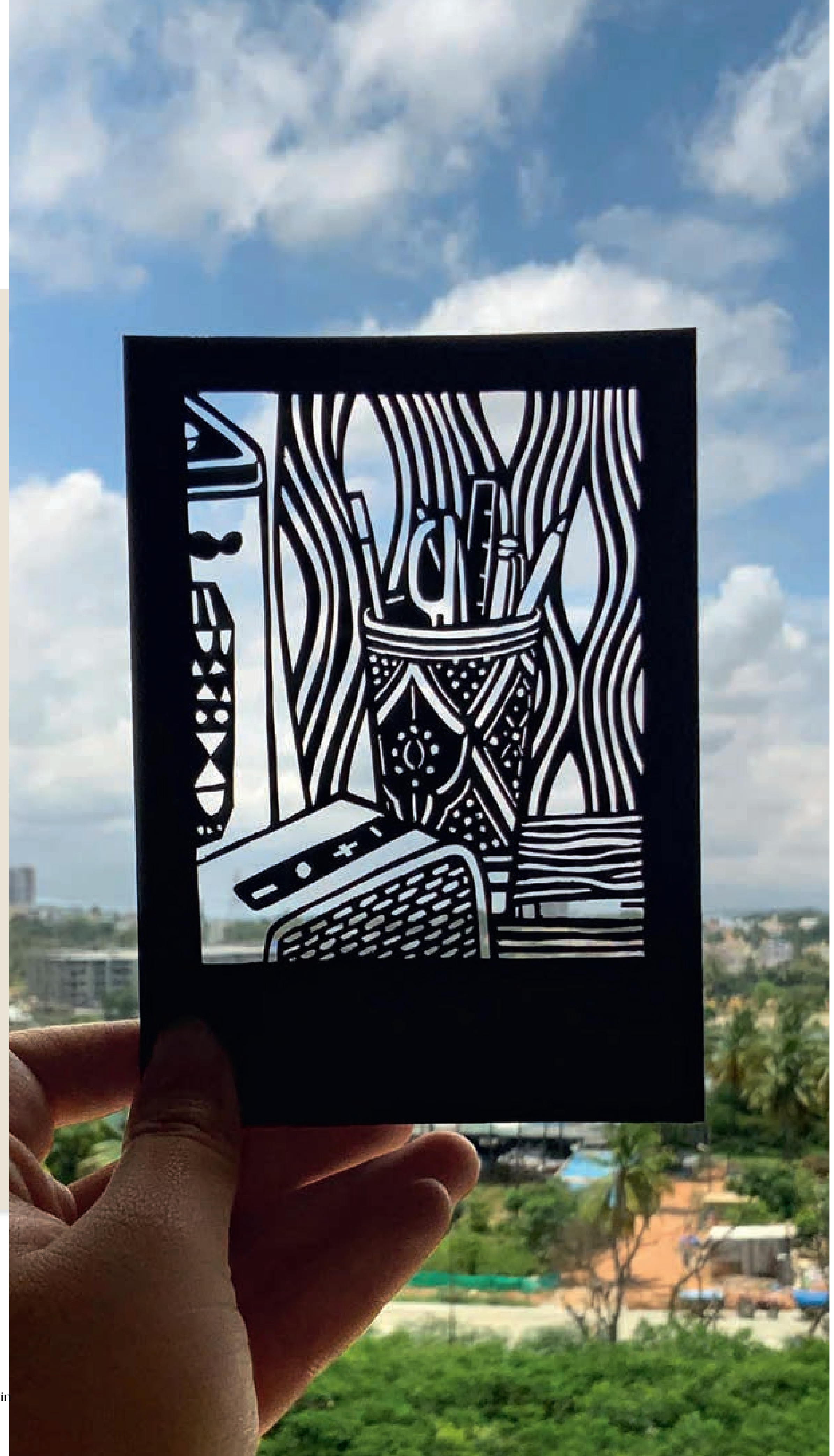
6

THE SECRET INDOORS

BY KASHMIRA SARODE

"During the second lockdown, with all avenues to step outside closed, I tried to focus indoors. I found that when forced to be confined, the brain works in mysterious ways and finds inspiration in the most mundane things. And that became my source of happiness during this time. I started noticing every nook and cranny in my home and noticed a fascinating amount of detail in the smallest of corners. Mesmerised by these details, I started a papercut series to capture these. This particular artwork shows an aspect of my happy place—the stationery items at my desk, a ceramic pencil holder with the most beautiful detail and a stationery box by Marimekko along with a speaker."

Kashmira Sarode is a multimedia artist obsessed with scale, as is evident from her large-scale murals (Harbouring Hope at St+Art *Chennai 2020) and her miniature embroidery patches*



JANELLE EFFIWATT

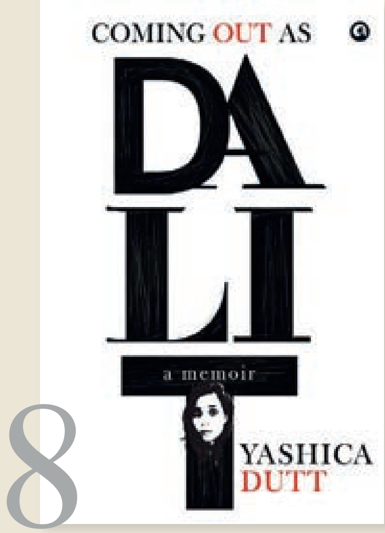
7

A ROOM OF MY OWN

BY SANJENA SATHIAN

"My happiest place in the world is my writing space. I haven't lived in the same place consistently, so the nature of my work desk or home office changes, but some things stay the same. Wherever I am, I try to find a very long table, which I push up against a window—ideally one that is east-facing. I keep my bookshelves nearby, and on the table itself, I keep a physical copy of *Roget's Thesaurus*, as well as any books I'm referencing in my work at the time. I also like to have a reading chair within spitting distance. This kind of set-up, a bright, inviting room that's close to my books (i.e. the very reasons I write) gives me something to look forward to every day. I feel beckoned to my workspace rather than afraid to get writing in the morning. Paying attention to the little comforts can make all the difference, both for writing and for happiness."

Sanjena Sathian's debut novel Gold Diggers *(HarperCollins) released earlier this year and is being made into a TV show by Mindy Kaling*



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THE LIGHTNESS OF BEING

BY YASHICA DUTT

"What are happy places? Are they simply corners of the rooms we inhabit? Or are they spaces outside our regimented lives we can seek refuge in? In the year and a half of the carnage caused by the complete mishandling of a pandemic, where almost every home knows someone that they lost, what does it mean to have a happy place? If you, like so many of us, are struggling with how to be happy these days or wrestling with the idea of what happiness even means, then you are not alone. To reconcile with the vacuum of loss, pain and suffering around us, we owe it to ourselves to find little gaps and tiny fissures that cut through the mountains of grief to make space for healing, restoration and repair. Especially as Dalit folks and marginalised people, who are battling with so much more than the pandemic, it is vital for us to find the openings to let joy in, whenever and wherever we can find them. Happy spaces don't always have to be external or a physical structure. In the pandemic, a happy space can simply be a few minutes taken from a grinding day to pay attention to our needs—physical, emotional and mental. It can be a place inside of us where we retreat to sit with our thoughts, ideas and feelings and emerge only when we feel heard. For me, my happy place is my favourite podcast in the background, my hands finding a rhythm of their own as I organise my closet, and my mind wandering to new, undiscovered places I haven't been before.

Yashica Dutt's memoir Coming Out As Dalit *(Aleph) won her the 2021 Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar* ■

ADAM VOORHES/GALLERY STOCK

Small wonders

If the past year and a half has taught us anything, it's that joy is fleeting and any source of good cheer needs to be preserved at all costs. **Priya Ramani** chases the new meaning of happiness to discover that the answer lies far from a new convertible or a hefty paycheque

DVL Padma Priya doesn't remember the first four days of her eight-day ICU visit. What the co-founder of the popular podcast Suno India does recall is the kind, empathetic nurse who urged her to visualise any 'happy moment' she was looking forward to after she recovered from COVID-19. Nine people died around her during this time. "I would know something was wrong when the machines started going off or when I heard the wails of family," she says. "The nursing staff would quickly pull the curtains around our beds."

A FRESH LEASE

Everything felt surreal after she was discharged. When the vehicle pulled up to her parents' home in Hyderabad, her six-year-old, Prakruti, came running to the car screaming, "Amma! Amma!" That's when Padma Priya broke down and started sobbing. The 'happy moment' she had clung on to with dear life in the ICU had come true: she was hugging her daughter again.

"Such an experience redefines how you look at life. You start to find joy in simple things," says Padma Priya, who is still recovering from the effects of long Covid, with persistent symptoms. "I've become obsessed with drawing oil pastels—I now find joy in completing a small piece of art." The editor of the multilingual, multigenerational podcast has also created a dedicated account on Instagram (@artistat34), where she proudly displays her wares.

Despite being grateful for coming out the other side of a fatally infectious disease, she still battles the guilt: "It's like being the sole survivor of a plane crash. You keep wondering, 'Why me?'" But every time she feels anxious about anything, she forces herself back to the present. "I remind myself I'm alive and cognitively functional. It makes me happy," she says.

ALTERED VIEWS

In a world where the elbow bump replaced the tight hug, sweatpants—once considered the most hated garment—became an invaluable wardrobe item, and going out for a movie or a meal was declared a maximum-threat activity, old ideas of happiness were bound to be redefined. The 'I Survived 2020!' fridge magnet a friend gifted me after the first wave of COVID-19 now only serves as a grim reminder of friends and family who didn't survive 2021.

Remember Shah Rukh Khan's philosophical take on *Koffee With Karan* when he said he was at ease but not at peace? "Peace is boring," he simply told host Karan Johar during his appearance with Alia Bhatt in season five. "When people say are you happy, I say I'm not stupid enough to be happy. You can't be happy." The pandemic taught us that in a world drowning in gloom, we had to snatch moments of happiness whenever we could.

> "THE PANDEMIC TAUGHT US THAT IN A WORLD DROWNING IN GLOOM, WE HAD TO SNATCH MOMENTS OF HAPPINESS WHENEVER WE COULD"

"It takes just three things to be happy," writes Raj Raghunathan in his book, *If You're So Smart, Why Aren't You Happy?* His shortlist includes great social relationships, a sense of purpose, and a positive attitude that allows you to feel in control even in challenging times.

TAKING STOCK

As we wrestled with extended solitude or extra family time, depending on our living situation, many of us discovered happiness one day at a time. In a world spiralling out of control, we focused on the small things we could control: cooking, gardening or binge-watching 'happy' television shows like *Ted Lasso*.

Entrepreneur Simran Mangharam's 11-year-old daughter Tara asked her grandmother to teach her how to knit. She was quick on the uptake and was soon knitting while watching TV and through online classes. Mangharam says that in addition to occupying her hands, knitting gave Tara a sense of achievement. It also helped her stay connected with her friends as she began knitting hairbands and bracelets for them.

As fresh air became a coveted commodity, our balconies and terraces became the happiest hangouts at home. Brand communication strategist Anaheeta Pinto says her family began exercising on the terrace daily at sundown and would reconvene there later for a family drink. "Now we don't exercise every day or drink together anymore, but we still go up far more than we used to, especially at sunset," she fondly remarks. "Some evenings the sun paints the sky pink, orange and purple. Other days it just sinks and disappears without a curtain call."

CHASING BUTTERFLIES

Lucky folks like Tushita Pate, author of cookbook *Flash In The Pan*, went forth and discovered new havens. A wildlife scientist friend introduced her to Avalahalli, a small, secluded forest in Bengaluru with a 7.5km walking track. "Nature is a great leveller and I was thankful to have this sanctuary to immerse my weariness," the former journalist says of the place that cradled her during these tough times.

Television host Mini Mathur has always derived happiness from the same things. "But COVID-19 let me own them without the guilt and fear of being too basic." Pre-covid, Mathur would feel ashamed of enjoying a day in pyjamas and was apologetic for being unproductive. The coronavirus legitimised the joy she got from simple rituals like longer dinner-table chats and watching retrospective cinema. "A small dinner with four friends seems like a treat," Mathur says. "A drive without masks, a workout session in the gym, a gourmet meal cooked at home, a shoot accomplished at home without a crew…all these things make me happy." ■

The homecoming

Her seductive depiction of how twenty-somethings live, catapulted **Sally Rooney** to literary fame. Her latest book reckons with the thornier aspects of fame, finds **Olivia Marks**

Photographed by **PERRY OGDEN**

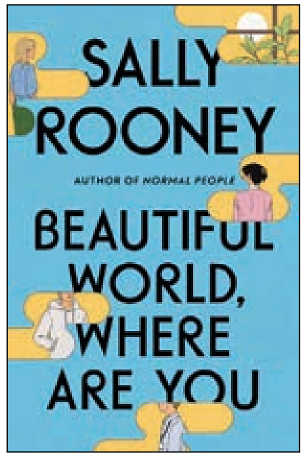
Three years ago, on an early summer afternoon in leafy Bloomsbury, London, a 27-year-old Sally Rooney and I were sitting in the grand offices of her British publisher, Faber, discussing her upcoming second novel. Her debut, *Conversations With Friends*—the story of two best friends and one's adulterous relationship with an older married man—had been out for a year, and already Rooney was haloed by a cult status: a literary novelist who had broken the mainstream. "Salinger for the Snapchat generation" is how she was introduced to the world ("I remember thinking at the time," Rooney guiltily recalls, "What is Snapchat?"), and anticipation for her follow-up was reaching fever pitch.

Fast-forward to 2021, and that second novel, *Normal People*, a will-they-won't-they tale for the millennial era about two students, Marianne and Connell, has sold more than three million copies worldwide to date, been praised by everyone from Barack Obama to Taylor Swift, and been translated into 46 languages. The subsequent TV adaptation has made overnight household names of its two newcomer stars, Daisy Edgar-Jones and Paul Mescal, who naturally adore her. "I want to consume everything Sally Rooney forever!" says Edgar-Jones from the set of her latest film, in New Orleans. "She is so lovely and so incredibly intelligent." Joe Alwyn, the British actor set to star in the upcoming adaptation of *Conversations*, is similarly smitten. "Sally's mind is just so brilliant," he says, "testing the boundaries of how we love, how we are able to love, how we are able—or not—to function within structures that we have been taught. And her refusal to tie things up neatly or offer definite solutions. I love that."

It suffices to say, if people were excited for *Normal People*, they are positively frothing at the mouth for Rooney's latest, *Beautiful World, Where Are You*, out in September. But on that afternoon three years ago, Rooney felt "uncertain". In fact, she thought maybe she didn't have another book in her. "Did I say that?" she exclaims today, her lively County Mayo accent rising an octave. How long, in reality, did the uncertainty last? "About three months," she says, laughing.

REAL DEAL

It is another warm afternoon in early summer, but this time there are hundreds of miles between us. She is in her new home in rural West Ireland, near to where she grew up in Castlebar—a quiet market town on the edge of the peaceful flat expanse of Lough Lannagh—while I am in East London, both of us grounded by the pandemic. Rooney has returned to the setting of her childhood after a stint in New York, and before that, 10 years in Dublin. Now afforded considerable status as the favoured chronicler of her often city-dwelling generation, she nevertheless finds that living in the luscious Irish countryside, with rabbits and birds outside her window, suits her. "It's nice to be surrounded by nature and to feel a little bit enclosed by that," she says. "It gives me the mental space to do what I like to do."



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Rooney is, unsurprisingly, a first-rate conversationalist (in 2013, while studying English literature at Trinity College Dublin, she won the European Universities Debating Championships—and it shows). She is open and charming, a master of self-deprecation, but most comfortable talking in the theoretical—while she can draw you in, she can also create distance at will. "You might imagine—I'm sure you don't imagine, but one could imagine—that I was attending glamorous parties in London," she says. "I have not left the country or seen anyone at all for over a year." For Rooney, an ideal week is filled with "flowers and trees and working" while weekends are for "seeing friends for walks and coffee".

I search her study for visual markers of the stratospheric success she has enjoyed in the intervening years, but given she is a self-identified Marxist, that isn't exactly Rooney's style—dressed in a taupe crewneck sweater, she is nearly camouflaged against the bare, beige walls of her home. Occasionally, though, there is a flash of a slim gold band on her ring finger, a marker from an intimate lockdown wedding last year to her long-term partner, John Prasifka, a maths teacher whom she met at university a decade ago. There have been other changes too. She recently turned 30, and her once-bobbed hair now sweeps her shoulders (in fact, she bears an uncanny resemblance to Edgar-Jones with her eyebrow-grazing chestnut fringe and the same doleful eyes). And she has become really rather famous.

The F-word, as her new novel will attest, is much on her mind. It does not sit easily. "There's a level at which I'm using the book in some way to explore emotions that I may not even be aware I'm going through," says Rooney, later alluding to "a kind of psychological toll" her success has taken. Rooney is a writer who can only draw on her own life and milieu for material ("imaginatively limited" is how she archly describes herself) and is well aware comparisons are going to be made between her and Alice, one of her protagonists, a wunderkind novelist in her late twenties who has moved from New York to a quiet Irish coastal town, where she is wrestling with her new status as a celebrity author. "There is a sense of having lived a lot of life very quickly, in quite a compressed sort of time frame," says Rooney of the past few years. "I think the book dramatises some of those challenges."

The story centres on Alice and her best friend, Eileen, a long-time staffer at a Dublin literary magazine, and their respective on-off love interests (this is, after all, a Rooney novel), Simon, a parliamentary adviser, and Felix, a warehouse worker. But as ever, with Rooney, plot is almost beside the point. The meat of the matter is the chapters given over to the best friends' lengthy philosophical email exchanges, >

in which they thrash out their thoughts on the big issues of their age and generation: ambition, relationships, identity politics, sex, motherhood, friendship, the impending destruction of Earth. "Aren't we unfortunate babies to be born when the world ended?" writes Alice to Eileen.

What is it about Rooney's novels that get under the skin? "When I look at my own reading life, the books that I've felt completely swept away by are set among the landed gentry in 19th-century Britain, which I really don't identify with at all," says Rooney, considering her work's ability to traverse age and nationality. "But I care about [those people] very much if they're in a Jane Austen or George Eliot novel. I guess what a novel can do is take you to a particular social world and particular relationship dynamics that play out in a way that makes you feel like you're standing in the doorway, looking in and observing exactly what's happening."

CONVERSATIONS AT LARGE

If her first two novels were about the transition from adolescence to adulthood, *Beautiful World* is about the next phase, "when you realise some of the doors have closed behind you." Much of the novel is concerned with what makes for a successful, meaningful life: whom does culture value and whom does it dismiss? Questions newly pertinent in the age of the coronavirus and its essential workers. And it asks how any of us are able to live, have children, or be happy when faced with potential political and environmental Armageddon. Is Rooney, like so many, preoccupied with doom? "Of course, very much so," she says. "My friends, my family and I feel enormously anxious and afraid... Would I have bothered putting in all these long, thoughtful emails expressing feelings about various issues if I thought that everything they were saying was really stupid and pointless? Probably not."

It would be easy to assume that Rooney, like her *Normal People* heroine Marianne, comes from a wealthy background, which is not the case. The single biggest change in her life since writing her novels has been money. "That is something that I did not have before that I now have, and it has made my life easier in every imaginable way, as of course having money does." Rooney's Marxist politics have long featured in her fiction and on her Twitter account before she deactivated it ("When I first started going around talking about Marxism," says Eileen in *Beautiful World*, "people laughed at me. Now it's everyone's thing"). As a teenager and young woman, she felt Ireland's major political parties had nothing to say to her, though now—after the legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2015 and the 2018 referendum that legalised abortion in Ireland—she's feeling more optimistic. "There's a lot more real debate and disputation going on in a way that feels substantial and challenging and exciting," she says.

> "There is a sense of having lived a lot of life very quickly, in quite a compressed sort of time"

Her country is famously going through a particularly fertile literary period, with many young women writers—Naoise Dolan, Megan Nolan, Niamh Campbell, among others—being inevitably touted as the "new Sally Rooney" for their 21st-century coming-of-age tales of sex, love, and work. Next April, Rooney's sister-in-law, Catherine Prasifka, will publish her debut novel, *None Of This Is Serious*. "When you look at how literature has developed in a broader historical way, there are [always] groups of writers who are in conversation with each other," says Rooney. Of course they will cover similar ground. "Exchanging letters…going to the same cafes…reading each other's work." That's certainly how Nicole Flattery and Rooney got to know each other. After being introduced by the editor of *The Stinging Fly*, a prestigious Dublin literary magazine Rooney would edit for two issues in 2018, the pair would meet for coffee and exchange work. "I definitely think one of the reasons Ireland does so well is that we have a scene that encourages and supports writers," says Flattery. "And it's not closed off. I never feel intimidated."

BACK TO ROOTS

For years, Rooney was a fixture on its non-stop schedule of book launches and poetry nights. When she went to New York as a Cullman Center Fellow at New York Public Library in 2019, it was "the first time I'd ever been outside Ireland for more than a month or so," she says. "I was homesick, which surprised me actually. When I was a teenager, I thought, you know, I can't wait to go live in New York," she whines in her best precocious-teen voice. "Well, it turns out I could wait, and did wait a long time. And then when I got there, I wanted to come home. Even though it's a beautiful city."

As borders started closing in the spring of last year, Rooney and John made the decision to return home. "We're both very close to our families," she said. "It felt important to be here." Lockdown has inevitably narrowed life, but Rooney's day-to-day hasn't changed all that much. Every morning, after her husband goes to teach at a nearby secondary school, she makes herself a coffee and breakfast before doing a Sudoku puzzle or going online to play chess—then retires to the couch to write. ("I do have a kind of study studio space where I can sit upright and not ruin my posture," she says, "but I like to lie on the couch, it's one of my favourite places to work.") In the evening, she and John will eat dinner and watch films. Rooney is still feeling the lack of dinner parties, though her social circle is small: "I'm not somebody who's really popular," she says, counting only four or five friends who know her "very, very well". They keep in touch by email. "I remember somebody saying to me, when *Conversations With Friends* came out, 'Oh, it's really, like, retro that they use email,' " she says, laughing. "I was like, 'It's what? I love emails.'"

The TV adaption of *Conversations* is currently in production, with *Normal People* director Lenny Abrahamson at the helm. Though Rooney worked on the scripts for the former show, she has been almost hands-off this time—finishing the book and moving house meant she couldn't do it justice, she says, plus Abrahamson is "a genius. I felt so confident that what he was going to do with it was going to be something so interesting and fresh." Out next year, it will star Joe Alwyn and Jemima Kirke as thirty-something couple Nick and Melissa. If you thought the sex in *Normal People* was abundant, then considering *Conversations* is, at heart, an adultery novel, it's not exactly in short supply here either.

For the first time in a long time, she plans to take a break. Being ubiquitous weighs on her mind. She has left Twitter—she doesn't believe novelists should have the cultural prominence the platform can afford, plus she is too "socially anxious to put out tweets".

It is sincere. Rooney's disconcertment at her public persona, her confusion as to why anyone would be fascinated by a woman who writes on her sofa and lives with a teacher in rural Ireland, with only birds and rabbits for company, is real. Perhaps, when all is said and done, the answer to her bafflement sits within her new novel. As Eileen puts it to Alice in one of their long, clever emails, the problem is we all just find each other too interesting. "And I love that about humanity," she writes, "and in fact it's the very reason I root for us to survive—because we are so stupid about each other." ■

Sally Rooney's third novel, *Beautiful World, Where Are You* (Faber & Faber) released in September

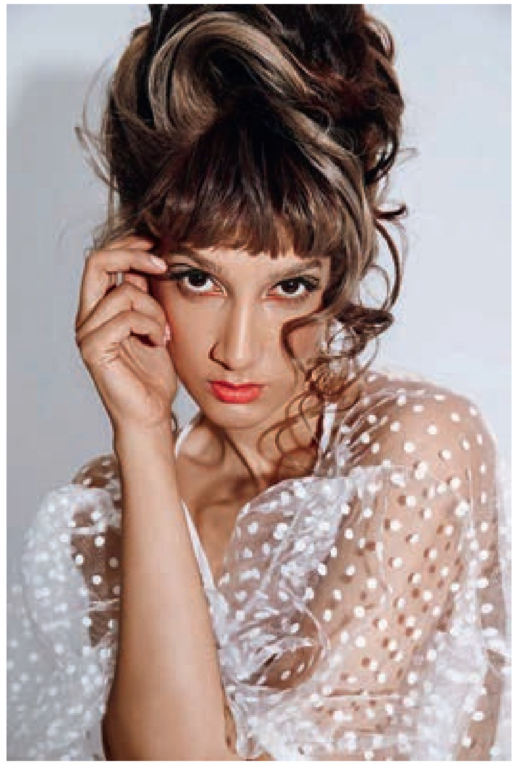
PRODUCTION BY AN LÁR FILMS; SHOT ON LOCATION AT BELLEEK WOODS

Loud and clear

The first Indian-origin face on the global burlesque stage, 31-year-old activist-dancer **Sukki Menon** is using her art form to foster a safe and empowering space for South Asian women, finds **Sheree Gomes Gupta**

SHOW TIME
A science graduate from Nottingham, Menon made her debut in burlesque in 2013

PHOTO: RACHEL SHERLOCK. TOP, ESQAPE. SKIRT, KIKU BOUTIQUE. JEWELLERY, CAMILLA SERETTI BY SAHAR MANLEY. HAIR AND MAKEUP: EVKA ALLEN. HAIR COLOURIST: KELVIN GLYN LLOYD-ROBERTS



> [Being a burlesque dancer] has been an extremely empowering journey of self-discovery, a personal journey for me to reclaim my body as a woman
> —SUKKI MENON

Within minutes of meeting on Zoom, Sukki Menon (stage name, Sukki Singapora) and I are chatting like old friends, discussing everything from the exploits of our cats (she has five) to the challenges of travelling (she moved homes from Singapore to the UK, and now splits her time between the two countries) in the midst of a pandemic.

Menon is soft-spoken and evidently not one for drama—a stark contrast to her meticulously contrived public persona as a burlesque dancer who, in 2020, walked the red carpet at Elton John's Oscar party in a five-metre-long rainbow wig. "I am chronically shy off-stage," she insists. Ironic, given her appearance in Netflix's controversial 2019 docuseries *Singapore Social*. "While the series showcased the diversity and the interesting calibre of people in Singapore, at the end of the day, it was a reality show steeped in drama, which I wasn't prepared for. But at that point, I loved it," says Menon. "I knew in that moment that I wanted to be in film and television. Being surrounded by all those cameras, mic'd up every day...it was electrifying."

As it happens, the show made it to a billboard in Times Square, New York, and therein started Menon's Hollywood dream. Since March 2020, she has spent her time at home in the UK, staying creatively engaged. "I've been secretly honing my acting skills with a professional coach, and within that process, I've started to discover myself outside of the burlesque character," she says, adding, "I have two film projects lined up—one in India and the other in the US," without divulging more details.

LEAPS AND BOUNDS

Menon's glamorous life belies the struggles she's had to face in her early years. Brought up in a conservative family in Singapore—her traditional Malayali father and devout British mother are both doctors—she was expected to toe the line. "My sisters are in the medical profession and everyone else is either a doctor or a lawyer. I'm definitely the wild child of the family," she says.

She wasn't always a rebel. Brilliant at science and "essentially a geek", she majored in science at the University of Nottingham, before working at an IT firm in the UK. "Up until then, because I'm biracial, I always felt like I was too brown to be fully British and too pale to be Indian or Singaporean. I was aware of fitting in nowhere," says Menon, who eventually found comfort in the vintage fashion scene, where it didn't matter "whether you were brown or white, what your gender was," before she discovered burlesque.

When she first heard about burlesque, it was like "a million light bulbs went off in my head," she says. "It was everything I'd wanted to do as a child—be artistic, express myself. Sex positivity was taboo in my family, and here was burlesque, which had strong, empowered women owning their bodies. I couldn't wait to sign up," says Menon, who incidentally trained in ballet from the age of seven to 15. At an audition in a theatre near her office in the UK, she wowed the judges with her sinuous moves, and was hired immediately.

CURTAIN CALL

"The spirit of burlesque is not to take yourself seriously," she says, explaining how a spontaneous weekend act turned into a full-blown profession. "It has been an extremely empowering journey of self-discovery, a personal journey for me to reclaim my body as a woman," says Menon, who has campaigned assiduously to legitimise the art form in Singapore.

Today, she strives for Asian representation and women's empowerment through her performing art. Currently the global ambassador of UK-based NGO The Sharan Project, which works with vulnerable South Asian women, Menon also founded the Singapore Burlesque Club to protect and empower Asian identities. She travels across the world meeting women, including schoolgirls in Kerala (her father's home state), to talk about women's rights and encourage them to follow their heart.

Menon's efforts have not gone unnoticed. In 2015, Queen Elizabeth II invited her to Buckingham Palace to honour her crusade for women's rights in Asia, while in 2016, she was nominated for the UN Women's HeForShe Awards. Given her formidable body of work as a women's rights activist, she's found a practice that takes her feminist views to a larger stage: "I believe that feminism is really about human rights and not about women taking more control... So yes, I absolutely consider myself a feminist. It is the right of every person to express themselves, exist, and live without judgement or fear." ■

Zara Pet Collection debuted in India this July; *Right*: Hermès's oak 'Bucket' bowl is inspired by the brand's iconic chaine d'ancre pattern

Mid September, Judy set off on her longest road trip from Mumbai to Jaipur. For the journey, her parents equipped her with a sun hat, a raincoat, a car hammock, a collapsible water bowl, a night shirt and a night light, as she gets anxious once darkness falls. "She has helped diffuse plenty of tension on the personal and professional front during the lockdown," says Adele Depenha, doting pet parent to the petite, doe-eyed indie rescue. "She's earned this break as much, if not more than us."

The furry and the four-legged have always been steadfast companions to humans, but through the pandemic they have also brought emotional stability to their anxious, crumbling masters, albeit inadvertently. Consequently, pet parents new and old have taken to lavishing their pets with extreme creature comforts as a small way of repaying the great debt they owe them. In 2021, if pets could brag, they'd be exchanging stories of down time in Goan villas with pools, sojourns in adventure camps designated for pets and serious upgrades to their lifestyle. The proliferation in pet services and specialised pet product stores is proof that during the lockdown pets have had it better than most, and justifiably so. In July, Zara brought its pet collection to India, while French luxury brand Hermès expanded its savoir faire to include stylish accessories—leashes, collars, bags and beds—for pooches in August 2021.

Aki and Gremlin have had an eventful year. The two indie rescues from Bengaluru's Second Chance Adoption Centre have been on road trips to Goa, Wayanad and Coonoor. As the pandemic recedes, their local outings have grown more frequent—their parents Sandhya Surendran, a media and entertainment lawyer, and Sanjeev T, a music producer and guitarist, are inseparable from their pooches and take them everywhere. "We would have gone nuts if it wasn't for them. They kept us sane through the second lockdown," says Surendran, who adopted the dogs, one for herself and one for her husband, in August 2020. The lockdown has spurred a boom in pet adoption and acquisition the world over, with pets offering healing and hope to humans grappling with uncertainty, stress and grief.

For 10-year-old Dayani Bhattacharya, whose family relocated from Delhi to Goa in January this year, the adoption of two slender indie siblings, Tokyo and Saké, has been pivotal in helping her adjust to her new environment. "For us the move to a quieter life in Goa seemed logical, but for Dayani it meant leaving all the familiar and the many friends she's made behind," says her mother, the PR professional Srimoyi Bhattacharya of Peepul Consulting.

To make the transition smoother, Dayani was promised another puppy—the family is already in possession of a fiesty three-year-old poodle called Momo. "We really wanted her to associate 2021 with something happy—not the lockdown, having COVID-19, or the weight of adapting to a new life," says Bhattacharya. Dayani's wish was twice answered as her parents rescued not one but two indies. "We're now six to a bed, three humans and three dogs. We feel so complete," adds Bhattacharya.

In a pandemic rife with stories of loss and loneliness, pet owners are providing some respite through cheerful social media narratives centred on the antics of their pooches and cats. The first thing TVC producer and new pet mum Divya Jagwani asks us to do is check out @Yoshi_thegoodestgirl on Instagram. A series of reels gives us a sense of the sprightly black Labrador. "Between my husband and me, I was the reluctant pet owner, but Yoshi has transformed the vibe of the house completely. She cuts the tension. We've held on to happiness at a really weird time in everyone's lives," says Jagwani. In her brief time on the planet, Yoshi has been on two Goan holidays and has a pretty packed social calendar as her parents take her to coffee shops, bars and pet-friendly co-working spaces. Adds Surendran, mum to Aki and Gremlin, "It's like living with two other people. Sometimes I spend hours just watching them be comical, argue or sleep. Nothing can make you feel as good in a shitty situation." >

GETTY IMAGES

EDITED BY **MEGHA MAHINDRU**

LIVING

SPOTLIGHT

Creature comforts

For many, the biggest emotional support in this year of isolation came from staying home with their four-legged friends. Bringing about one of the highest rates in canine and feline adoptions, the lockdown also fostered a new set of entrepreneurs who are revolutionising India's pet industry. **Purva Mehra** reports

HERMÈS
SELLIER
PARIS

THE PET SET

Five Indian women-run businesses that are leading the luxury pet industry

FOR HOLISTIC TREATS

A PETTER LIFE BY ANJALI KALACHAND AND SACHIN SHETTY

If you haven't dabbled in or dived head first into holistic wellness, then you have probably been living under a rock. With A Petter Life, an online pet store for pooches, Anjali Kalachand made sure to also bring pets into the light. The e-store specialises in accessories, grooming products and toys that simplify pet parenting in addition to retailing organic, preservative-free treats and edibles.

Kalachand's enterprise, co-founded with family friend Sachin Shetty, resulted from a personal requirement: she was looking for holistic healing solutions for the indie she adopted five years ago, who eventually succumbed to health complications. "There was a dearth of holistic solutions for pets. Vets tend to prescribe food out of a packet and that didn't resonate with me," says Kalachand, a former banker who took up a course in pet nutrition and healed her indie's skin ailments with the right kind of food.

A Petter Life, which was set up in January this year, aims to live up to the promise held in its name. It's more than a store—through the platform you can book a basic or advanced nutrition consultation for your pet with Kalachand, who calls her service Nutriwoof. The site also provides a directory of essential information on a comprehensive range of breeds, including personality traits and genetic predisposition. To round off its offerings, you can even get A Petter Life to calculate your dog's ideal calorie intake via the site.

Massage Oil
Nutribath
Oil Supplement

FOR PET HOLIDAYS

WAG-A-BOND BY KANNAGI SHANBAG

At the foot of the wild expanse of Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary in Karjat is a three-acre haven designated as a resort for our domesticated friends. Mumbai-based Kannagi Shanbag runs Wag-a-Bond, a 'carefree getaway for you and your dog'. Once Shanbag moved back to Mumbai from New Zealand, where she was training to be a veterinary anesthesiologist, she wanted to address a gap in the market. "A pet inclusive, pet-first destination where the four-legged could explore their natural instincts without being on a leash," as she describes it.

Wag-a-Bond has been around for five years but has during the pandemic become a popular work-from-home destination for pet owners who have had long spells of isolation with their pets at home. The cottages are kitted out with special beds for dogs, the three acres are fenced to ensure safety and pets are treated to special gourmet meals catered by Lizzie's Delicious, a pet food service operating out of Mumbai. For their humans, Kannagi serves equally indulgent fare that's largely farm-to-table, using produce from the farm housed within Wag-a-Bond.

"THERE'S A DEARTH OF HOLISTIC SOLUTIONS FOR PETS. VETS PRESCRIBE FOOD OUT OF A PACKET AND THAT DIDN'T RESONATE WITH ME"

—ANJALI KALACHAND

GETTY IMAGES

FOR PET PHOTOGRAPHY

PAWPARAZZI BY PRATHIMA PINGALE

Prathima Pingale's regular day can strike envy in the heart of any animal lover. As a pet photographer, she gets to spend her days studying other people's pets and what makes them tick. This constitutes as pre-shoot 'work' because a pet will only reveal its true nature to those its comfortable around. With Pawparazzi, which she set up in 2019, her intention was to capture a pet's true personality as opposed to coaxing them into poses. Pingale's love for dogs, and a former dream to be a vet, propelled her to pursue pet photography.

In addition to specialising in birthday shoots, Pingale also offers maternity shoots that involve documenting a pet's relationship with its pregnant pet parent, with a follow-up shoot once the baby is born and starts interacting with the pet. "In the lockdown I've seen a huge demand for adventure shoots," says Pingale. "Pet parents are bringing their pets along for kayaking, trekking, road trips...and I get to capture those unique, thrilling moments." >

FOR PET GROOMING

ZOIVANE BY NISHMA SINGHAL

Pets are darlings, but let's face it, there are instances when they don't smell their best. That's where Zoivane steps in. Launched in September 2020, the online retailer is the equivalent of Bath & Body Works for furry ones. The site lists grooming products, bath essentials and fine fragrances all developed by Nishma Singhal, who put her master's degree in cosmetics and perfumery (from the University of Versailles in Paris) to uncommon use. Derived from the Italian giovane (meaning 'youth'), Zoivane products are meant to leave your pets feeling youthful.

Singhal works with a trusted group of groomers, trainers and pet parents for the R&D of her pampering products that are "result-oriented and fragrance-forward," she says, speaking of the gap she identified in the pet grooming market. Her bestsellers are dog shampoos, pet fragrances, anti-odour sprays and lately, a host of toilet training products which have really moved during the pandemic. Lavender, aloe and citronella are some of the thoughtful ingredients employed by Zoivane that leave your pooch or cat smelling like a fragrant fruity or floral bouquet.

FOR RETAIL THERAPY

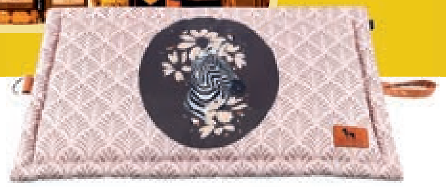
HEADS UP FOR TAILS BY RASHI SANON NARANG

For Rashi Sanon Narang, who runs what is perhaps India's largest chain of premium pet stores, Heads Up For Tails (HUFT), the pandemic has been a period of no rest and acute learnings. Even though her 40 stores spread countrywide have had to remain shuttered through the lockdown, buying online hasn't slowed down. "We see a tonne of adoption messages on our internal work groups and even in my circle of friends. I love that this is the conversation now. It's a welcome change from buying," she says.

HUFT has been around since 2008, a time when choice wasn't a luxury for pet owners looking for products and food. Sanon Narang set up her retail outfit and populated it with products manufactured in-house, such as chemical- and preservative-free bedding, one-of-a-kind pet apparel, toys and treats. Her catalogue includes products which "India at the time didn't have the capabilities of producing." HUFT has also championed sustainability by introducing a range of upcycled and recycled toys and bedding.

While the lockdown has been a damper for most businesses, Sanon Narang, who has raised over US$37 million in funding, is brimming with positive insight. "Being at home with their pets, I've noticed that a lot of pet owners transitioned into pet parents, and that change has been spectacular." Through the pandemic, HUFT has been busy with initiatives such as feeding and vaccination drives as well as programmes like The Water Bowl Project (to provide water for strays), the Monsoon Campaign (to shelter strays), and the Warmth In Winter campaign, among others.

> "WE SEE A TON OF ADOPTION MESSAGES ON OUR INTERNAL WORK GROUPS... IT'S A WELCOME CHANGE FROM BUYING"
> —RASHI SANON NARANG



GETTY IMAGES

PET PEEVES

At Mumbai's World For All Animals, you can adopt IRL or virtually from this catalogue of charming candidates

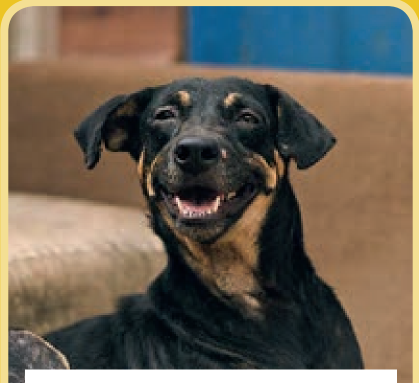
Photographed by **PARIZAD D**

BRUNO & MOTI
The last of his litter, six-month-old Bruno is looking for a family. Moti (behind) has a damaged eardrum (and is up for virtual adoption) but is oddly a good listener

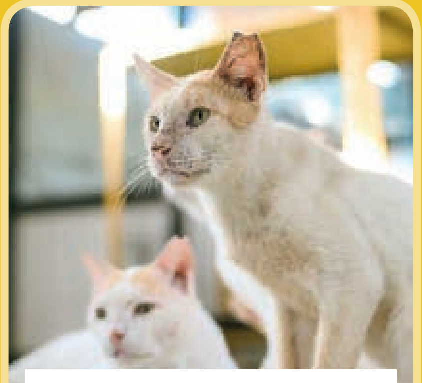
SMITH
A tomcat with a petite frame, he loves salmon and sardines, but hates pretentious people

TROY
This stud muffin, an indie-husky cross, loves car and bike rides, but detests wearing sunglasses

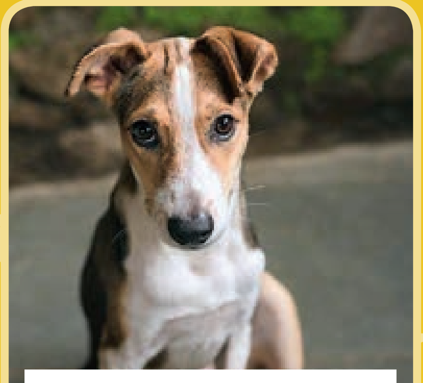
NAAN
This sprightly puppy is the real-life incarnation of Scrappy-Doo—feisty, small-framed and a bundle of fun



RICKY
Cheery and charming, this four-year-old, available for virtual adoption, calls posing his forte



SAMEER & BHATIA
Call them double trouble, this brother duo is inseparable and is currently up for virtual adoption



HOOK
This winsome five-month-old can make cat and dog friends, but sucks at football because of a crooked foot ■

For adoptions, contact *Worldforall.co*

Walk on the wild side

Foraging is the food buzzword du jour. As the found-fare revolution moves from the forests to the city bylanes, **Sonal Ved** gets the low-down on the bounty in our backyards from India's foremost urban foragers

Photographed by **PANKAJ ANAND**

WILD BUNCH
Banana flower, papaya, custard apple, star fruit and jackfruit are some edible treats found in a single lane in Mumbai's Chowpatty area

I have been an urban forager even before I knew what it meant. My school was at Churchgate, a leafy area in Mumbai that is home to trees older than my ancestry. The school compound had a papaya tree, not so tall, so children could pluck the fruit and take it home. The perfect ammunition, then, to attempt a Som Tam a la Tarla Dalal, the 20th-century cookery queen. There were jamuns too, the tart Indian berry that fell by default and was often gobbled between breaks. If you ever asked me to empty the pocket of my uniform, a lone stick of tamarind from my school ground would be the sure sign of my daily pilfering.

Playful food heists apart, it wasn't until last year's lockdown that I realised the real power of urban foraging. At its peak, I craved a jackfruit biryani. Like fresh mutton, to get your hands on a succulent jackfruit meant ordering it in advance. But with markets shut, the only source around was the jackfruit tree in my neighbourhood. For years I had noticed that within hours of fruition, the fruit would magically disappear, as if someone was keeping a watchful eye. And this time, it was me. As two plump fruits hung low, I leapt to satiate my craving.

WILD THINGS

"There are two things that bind humans around the world—food and nature—and urban foraging is an accessible path to both," says photographer and writer Sanjiv Valsan. Mumbai-based Valsan leads foraging walks at Aarey Forest and agrees with my speculation that travel restrictions may have inspired urban locavores to turn to their neighbourhood bounty for new culinary experiences.

It surely happened to Mumbai-based chef Thomas Zacharias, who recently cooked an entire meal using ingredients plucked from his neighbourhood. "For a vlog, my friend, comedian Kaneez Surka, challenged me to cook a meal 'as if the world was ending,'" says the chef, who has extensively worked with foragers during his stint at The Bombay Canteen. Along with Surka, he set out to loot edibles around Bandra and chanced upon moringa, raw mangoes, curry leaves, bimbli, betel and banana leaves to cook a meal comprising pickle, breadfruit fry, crab curry and a hibiscus drink.

GREENER PASTURES

I will refrain from calling foraging a trend, for gathering is one of the most primitive human instincts. Our ancestors foraged before they learnt to grow their food. It is this hunt for ingredients that forms the premise of restaurants like Forage in Los Angeles. Chef René Redzepi, a pioneer of foraging who launched an app that helps users find edibles in local parks, has dedicated foragers on his team at Noma. In Mumbai, Masque is known to procure prickly sea buckthorn and dandelion from the wild in Kashmir, while in New York, chef Dan Barber's foraging practices got him a spot on *Chef's Table*. >

VISUAL EDITOR: JAY MODI

PICKY EATER Dr Lobo’s foraging trail led her to pick crab claws, oxalis, cluster figs, purslane and pomelos in Goa’s Latin Quarter

What separates forest foraging from city hunting is that forest produce is pristine and often more nutritious. But the urban landscape has its advantages too. For forager Kush Sethi, walks in Delhi’s Lodhi Gardens and Sunder Nursery fare better than those in the forests around his city. “Delhi has non-tropical, dry, thorny shrub-grass forests that offer limited produce during a short monsoon and spring period, so the gardens are a better bet,” says the 30-year-old, who has been foraging since 2016. In his neighbouring gardens, Sethi, who takes foraging group trips, has chanced upon common city edibles such as dill, wild cannabis, cardamom leaves, air potatoes and isabgol leaves. “For me, foraging started as a way to understand why urban authorities choose to grow only a specific set of plants in the cities and why other plants are seen as weeds,” he says, disheartened to find ‘weeds’ being used synonymously with all that is dirty and unloved. “Many such weeds grow without any intervention, are zero maintenance, and offer habitat for pollinating insects and birds while keeping the city green and protecting it against erosion.”

Valsan gets the best of both worlds. While Aarey is technically forest land, its proximity to the city makes it an urban forager’s dreamscape. “On our walks we have discovered copious amounts of nala bhaji or Thai water spinach, loth, a variety of tuber, shevli, the flower of a tuber and, most interestingly, kon, a 20kg tuber that required two hours and three people to pull out,” says an enthused Valsan.

None of these foragers have a background in botany, but they share a keen interest in the flora around them. Like Valsan, for Calicut-based Shruti Tharayil, foraging came about after she started working with tribal communities. Since 2017, she has been conducting walks in Chennai and Udaipur, based on passed-down knowledge from indigenous tribes. “We have this idea that nature is somewhere out there, but look around and it’s everywhere,” she says.

For Valsan too, urban foraging is not just a culinary tool but a way to spark conversation about social and environmental activism. “These walks give people an opportunity to learn about indigenous ingredients and ponder on how we are living on borrowed land from indigenous people,” says Valsan, who started the Rewilding Aarey movement, a collective that spotlights ingredients from this region.

NATURE’S CURE

The 33-year-old Tharayil looks at plants holistically as “edibles with medicinal value”. In Chennai, you’ll find her hunting down *kuppaimeni* (a leafy green that is as good for the skin, as it is for a toothache), *punarnava* (which revives the blood system and liver cells) and yellow flowers called *Tridax procumbens* that can be crushed on wounds.

Goa-based Dr Maryanne Lobo started foraging as a child with a minimum of six forest trips a year. “Nature works on a principle that when something grows in an area, it’s usually what people of that area need.” Lobo is an Ayurveda specialist who brings foraged berries “at par with blueberries”), edible flowers (to perch on salads) and yams from the deep green pockets of Goa to her dining table. “In the city, you’ll find trees with leaves that have immunity-building and liver-protecting properties,” she reveals.

To forage safely requires a good amount of training as many palatable plants often look identical to lethal ones. But besides thorough knowledge, foragers today have access to many modern methods. Chef Zacharias saves location pins of edible trees in his vicinity, while Tharayil’s walks aid her 10-day online programme that encourages students to study plants, forage and cook.

As for me, I’ve moved from aimless trails around South Mumbai to serious plant detection via an app called LeafSnap. It’s kind of like Shazam, except it’s for trees. I cannot think of a more fruitful pastime.■

> “Two things bind humans around the world—food and nature—and urban foraging is an accessible path to both”
>
> —SANJIV VALSAN

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Vogue DIARY

This October, we bring you the best in luxury and fashion

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The rise of conscious consumerism has also led to brands adopting conscious designs while celebrating traditions and preserving our crafts. If there is one brand that has served as the custodian of craft while being a change-maker in this space, it is Fabindia. Spotlighting meaningful craftsmanship, the brand's latest collection Jashn-e-Riwaaz celebrates India's rich heritage and pays homage to our artisans. From the gorgeous weaves of Chanderi and Maheswari to the rich hues of Banarasi, the delicacy of the Aari embroidery to the punch of the patchwork and appliques, the beauty of Ajrakh, Dabu and gold Khari prints to the textures of Tussar, Ghicha and Gajji, these stunning outfits can be passed on as heirlooms from generation to generation.

For more information, visit Fabindia.com, call 1800-100-1212 or visit your nearest Fabindia store

The Gold Standard Life

Renowned for offering connoisseurs the ultimate indulgence in luxury living, the Lodha Group has collaborated with leading designer Gauri Khan for an exclusive grand designer residence at The Trump Tower in Lodha Park, Worli. In a first-of-its-kind collaboration, the exclusive residence flaunts contemporary and refined elegant designs that are tailored to make luxurious living a royal, unique experience. Think antique mirrors enhanced by sweeping chandeliers, classic bookshelves complemented by white wallpaper, the use of shattered glass as a design element in the bathrooms—the designer space cocoons its residents in comfort and glory.

For more information, visit Lodhagroup.in/trumptower

Pack Smart, Travel Smart

While we pack our most stylish clothes for a vacation, there is no reason our luggage should be any less stylish. Enter Samsonite's Evoa Tech. Samsonite's latest innovative offering blends functionality with fashion, making carrying around your luggage an easy affair. The stylish smart luggage encompasses a TSA-approved fingerprint lock system, an integrated weighing scale, and a bluetooth tracker that will locate your luggage up to 50 metres. What's better? These cool features come fitted into a sleek brushed black body with copper accent detailing— making it a much-needed travel companion, whether you're traveling for work or play!

Available at Samsonite airport stores and exclusive outlets across India

A TROPICAL RETREAT AWAITS

If you are looking for a tropical destination for your impending nuptials or just want to celebrate a milestone anniversary, Phuket in Thailand has reopened for fully vaccinated Indian travellers without quarantine requirements through Phuket Sandbox programme. While the SHA (Safety and Health Administration) promises a safe and secure experience, travelers must complete vaccination at least 14 days before travelling, have a valid visa, have health insurance (minimum of USD 100,000) covering Covid-19, a hotel reservation, a negative RT-PCR Test result taken no later than 72 hours before the flight along with a valid certificate of entry.

For more information, visit Tatnews.org

THE POWER OF PLATINUM

Boasting exquisitely designed jewellery that pays an ode to women who embody empathy, compassion, resilience is Platinum Guild International's Platinum Evara. Crafted from platinum—a metal that remains unchanged over time—these gorgeous diamond-studded leaf motif earrings are a testament to the modern woman's journey as she stays grounded to her roots yet branches out in search of new horizons. Flaunting angular, dimensionally fluid designs, these earrings make for a versatile pair that can be worn to a business meeting or a cocktail party.

For more information visit Ptevara.in or follow @PlatinumEvara on Instagram

Your Time To Shine

If you are looking for the perfect accessory that will always keep you on time and also make sure you shine, Swiss watch brand, Tissot's The Bellissima watch is for you. The delicate dial flaunts a dome-shaped scratch-resistant sapphire crystal while the stainless steel strap features a butterfly clasp with push buttons. Along with being water-resistant up to a pressure of 5 bar (50 m / 165 ft), the durable watch also undergoes several tests, including its ability to resist impacts and pressure, as well as the penetration of liquids, gas, and dust. What does that mean? From effortless day looks to elaborate evening styles, the Bellissima has been designed to be worn for magic moments and special occasions that life has to offer.

For more information visit Tissotwatches.com/en-in

Jewels That Last Forever

Whether it's for a special gift or a treat for yourself, you can be assured that diamond jewellery by De Beers Forevermark is truly a treasure that will last forever. Embodying the undying spirit of the woman who wears the exquisite pieces, the jewels from the Forevermark Avaanti™ collection celebrates the power of possibility and encourages women to unleash their ripple on the world. The 36 stand-out pieces including rings, earrings, pendants, and bracelets feature rare De Beers Forevermark diamonds in 0.10, 0.18, and 0.30 carats at their centre. Set in 18k yellow, white, or rose gold, the clean, circular designs are also available with the added brilliance of pavé diamonds. Available at all authorised De Beers Forevermark jewellers across the country.

For more information, visit Forevermark.com

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No More Creases

How often does it happen that you are all dressed for an important event and just when you're going out the door, you notice a wrinkle on your outfit? Wish you could have an easy fix for that? Say hello to Philips garment steamers. Whether it is to smooth over creases or just refresh your clothes, the Philips garment steamers heat up quickly and are safe for all kinds of fabrics. With a large water tank for longer steaming sessions, five steam settings, and a fabric brush for deeper steam penetration, the steamers are quick, powerful, and portable as they have an adjustable pole and also come with a glove for extra protection during steaming.

For more information, visit https://www.domesticappliances.philips.co.in/ironing/garment-steamers?plist=4

THE VERSATILITY OF PASHMINA

Combining fashion with art, Modarta—a bespoke brand is renowned for seamlessly contemporising the classic pashmina. Featuring a diverse colour palette, intricate embroidery, Swarovski detailing, and unique patterns, the brand's contemporary take on the dynamic fabric is versatile, boasting endless possibilities. The latest among the collection of exquisite pieces is a red pure pashmina stole featuring an intricate white thread floral hand embroidery—ideal for festive occasions and gatherings. The brand's collection is available on Jaypore, Nykaa Fashion, Etsy, Myntra, Carma, etc and they also customise gift boxes for weddings and special occasions.

For more information, visit Modarta.in or follow @modartaindia on Instagram

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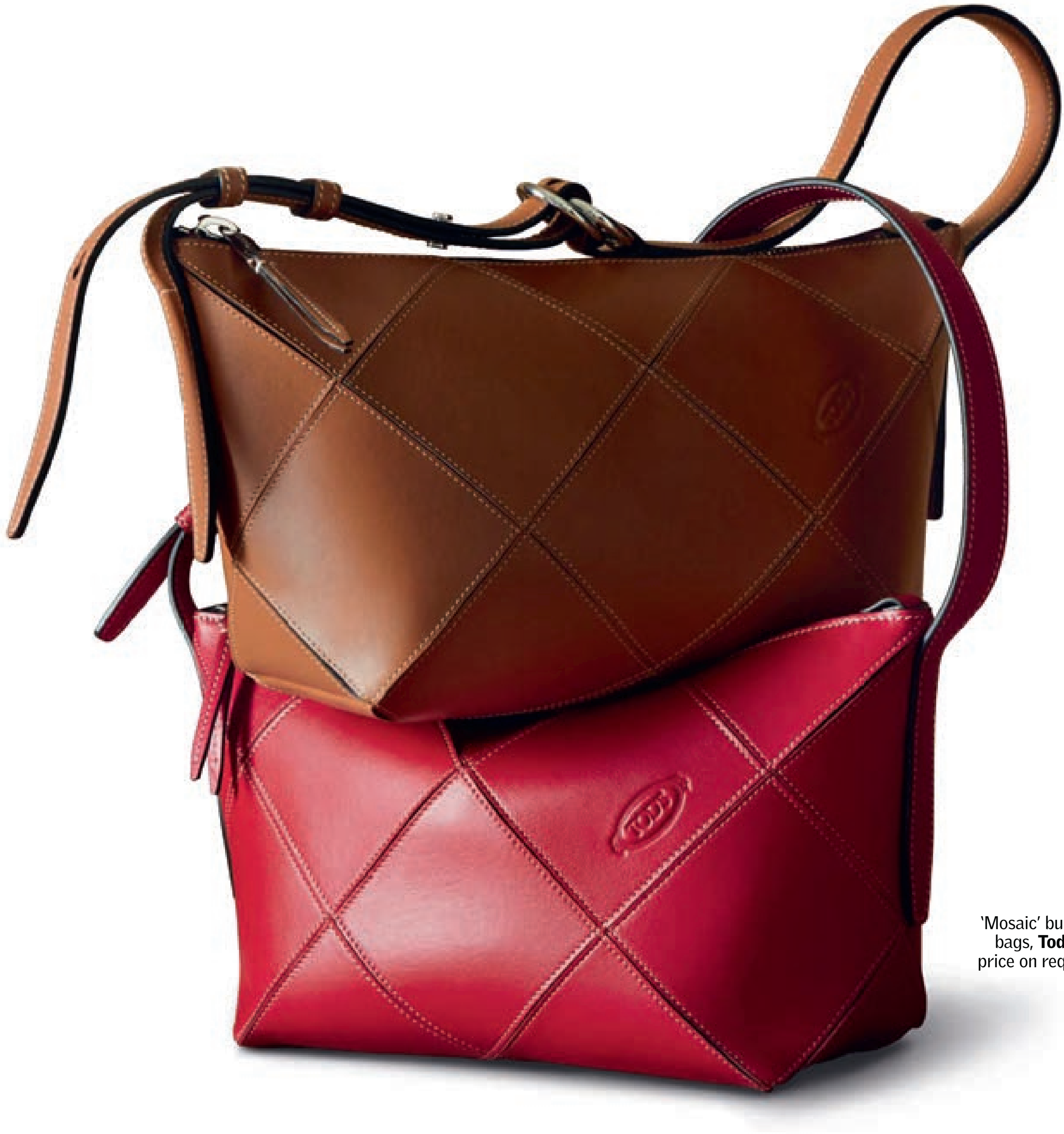

'Mosaic' bucket bags, **Tod's**, price on request

Patched together

Creativity and consciousness are at the heart of Tod's Mosaic series, which brings a strong design perspective to what originated as a traditional custom in the Marche region of Italy. Local women who were employed at leather and shoe factories in the district were known to handcraft small bags for personal use from production leftovers. This collection honours that tradition using the same upcycling process. The geometric composition, a uniform palette and the textural detailing ensure that the patchwork process gets a sophisticated upgrade. Taking it a step further, to honour the craftsmanship behind this process, artist Willie Cole created beautiful objects of design in collaboration with artisans from Marche. These sculptures were subsequently unveiled at Salone del Mobile in Milan in September and will travel to Paris, London, New York and Miami. – *Priyanka Khanna*

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